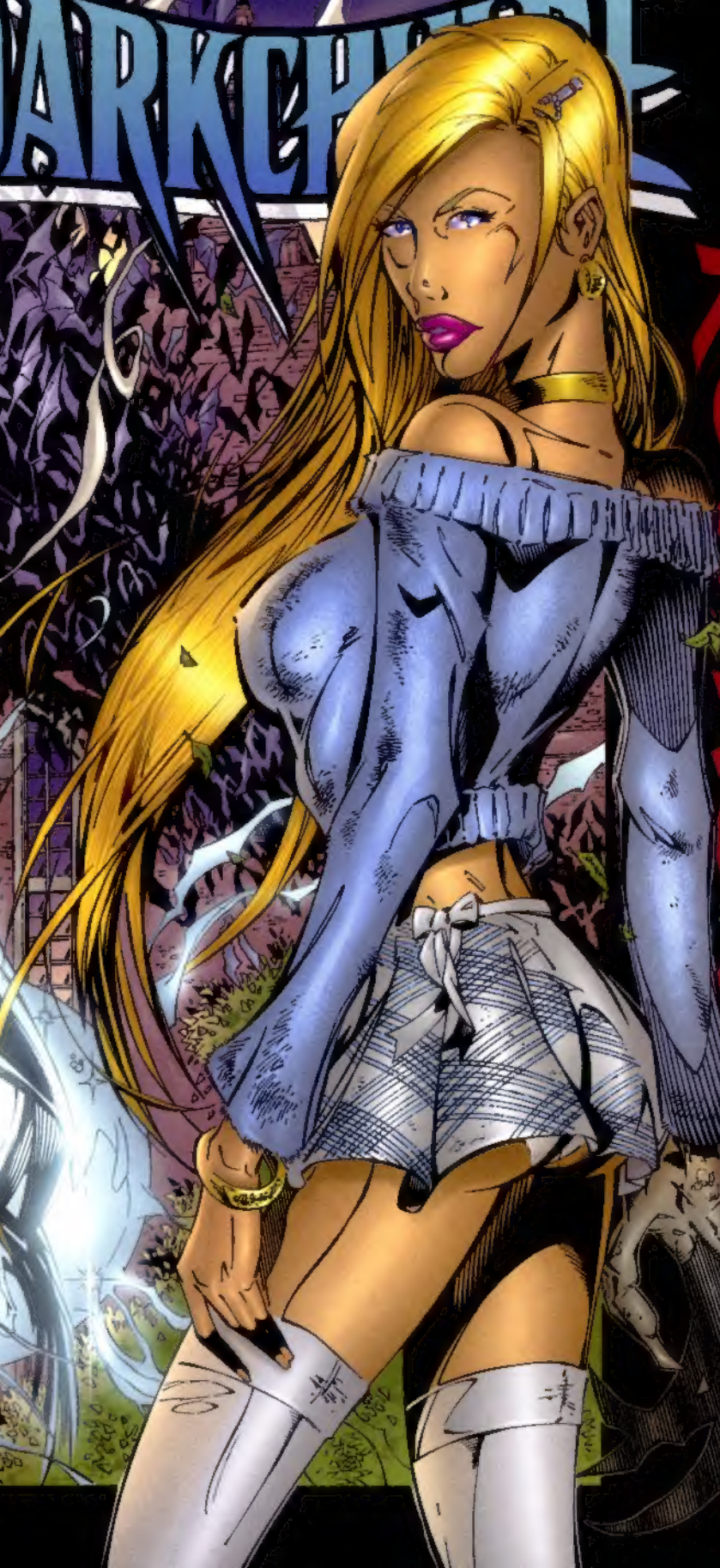




DARKCHAMBER



RECOVERIES

Image Comics and Majesty Graphics
presents

Part 1

"The Descent"

Randy Queen
creator • writer • penciler • ulcer

Jason Gorder
Marlo Alquiza
tag team ink dream

Jimmy Yu
Have you seen my golf balls?
colors • computers • crayons

Todd Klein
I'm going on vacation
letters

Julia Simmons
Melanie Simmons
make my phone and fax
ring entirely too often

Special Thanks To:
everyone at Image central,
and the fans for making a
"remaster" possible.



for image comics
Larry Marder
executive director
(and all around swell guy!)

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"If the demons of our dreams
were to us not bound
What a nightmare then,
our world to be found..."

• A Treasury Of Sorrows

"The sleep of reason
breeds monsters..."

• Coya

A PLACE WHERE ALL THINGS
FOUL REJOICE...

...WHERE THE INNOCENT ARE
CRUCIFIED, AND THE WICKED
TRUMPET A CHORUS OF DOOM.

HELL'S DISTANT COUSIN, THE
NIGHTMARE REALM. A PLACE
WHERE SPIDERS GO TO DIE...

...I SAVED A SPIDER
ONCE WHEN I WAS FIVE.

MY FATHER WAS GOING TO KILL IT, BUT I
STOPPED HIM. WHEN HE ASKED MY WHY,
I SMILED AND SAID, "MAYBE ONE DAY A
BIG GIANT WILL RESCUE ME FROM
GETTING SQUASHED."

IF FATE WOULD ONLY RETURN
SUCH FAVORS IN KIND...

IF ONLY I HAD SOME KIND OF
KARMA REDEMPTION TICKET...

IF ONLY SOME GIANT
WOULD RESCUE ME...

...NOW WOULD MOST
DEFINITELY BE THE
TIME.



RIGHT ON
CUE...

...COULDN'T HAVE
GONE DOWN BETTER IF
IT HAD BEEN REHEARSED.

THEY LOOK NEARLY
AS SURPRISED AS
I AM.

IT IS I WHO AM
DAMNED, CARRIED
OFF INTO THE TWILIGHT
BY THIS ANCIENT BEAST
OF LEGEND.

SAVED FROM THE SQUABBLING
HORDE OF MONSTROSITIES
VANISHING IN THE MISTS FAR
BELOW.

SAVED BY THE ONE
CREATURE THEY SEEM
TO FEAR THE MOST...

...BUT
WHY?

NOOOOOO!
FANG! BETRAYER!
JUDAS! DAMN YOU
FOR SNATCHING OUR
PRIZE WHEN VICTORY
WAS AT HAND!

DAMN
YOU, FANG!
DAMN YOU!

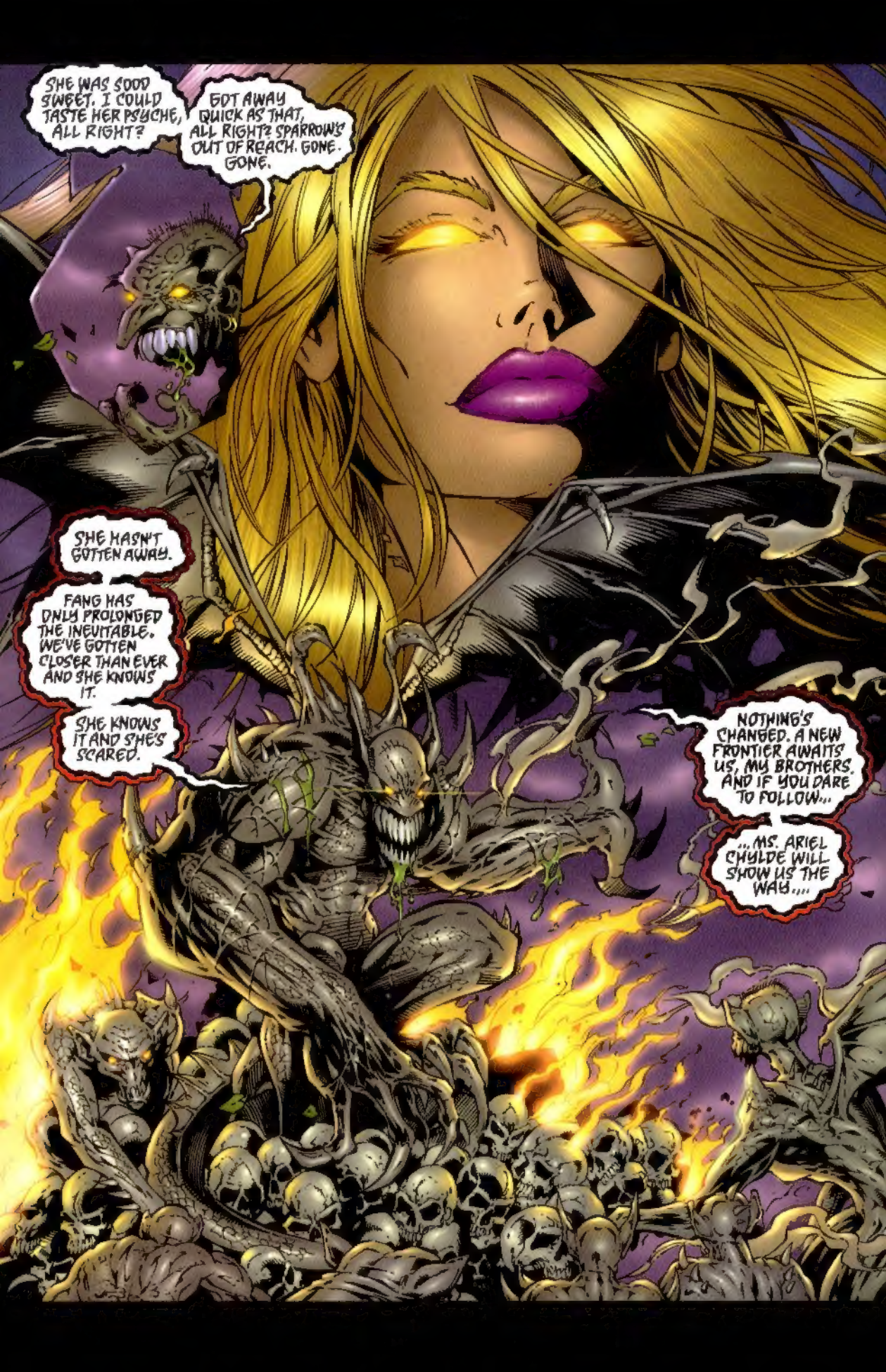
SHE'S
GETTING
AWAY!

STINKY DAME!
TEAR HER UP! EAT
HER!! SUCK HER
BONES, I WOULD!

YOU SAID SHE
WOULD BE OURS, ALL
RIGHT?!? SAID SALVATION
WAS SO CLOSE YOU COULD
SMELL IT, ALL RIGHT?

OUR SALVATION JUST
TOOK FLIGHT FROM US WITH
OUR ANCIENT ENEMY, ALL
RIGHT? GOTTEN AWAY,
QUICK AS THAT, ALL
RIGHT?

YOU'VE GOT
ABOUT TWO SECONDS
TO STOP YOUR INANE
BABBLING BEFORE I
SNAP YOUR NECK,
ALL RIGHT??!



SHE WAS SOOO
SWEET. I COULD
TASTE HER PSYCHE,
ALL RIGHT?

GOT AWAY
QUICK AS THAT,
ALL RIGHT? SPARROW'S
OUT OF REACH. GONE.
GONE.

SHE HASN'T
GOTTEN AWAY.

FANG HAS
ONLY PROLONGED
THE INEVITABLE.
WE'VE GOTTEN
CLOSER THAN EVER
AND SHE KNOWS
IT.

SHE KNOWS
IT AND SHE'S
SCARED.

NOTHING'S
CHANGED. A NEW
FRONTIER AWAITS
US, MY BROTHERS.
AND IF YOU DARE
TO FOLLOW...

...MS. ARIEL
CHULDE WILL
SHOW US THE
WAY....



DAMMIT!

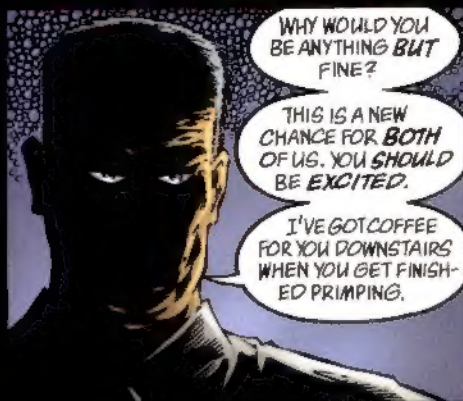
JUST ONE NIGHT'S SLEEP. THAT'S ALL I--

ARIEL?

BEEP BEEP BEEP

5:49

YEAH, YEAH, I'M UP! I'M FINE...
BAD DREAM... I'M FINE.



WHY WOULD YOU BE ANYTHING BUT FINE?

THIS IS A NEW CHANCE FOR BOTH OF US. YOU **SHOULD** BE EXCITED.

I'VE GOT COFFEE FOR YOU DOWNSTAIRS WHEN YOU GET FINISHED PRIMMING.



YEAH...

NEW TOWN...
NEW HOUSE... NEW SCHOOL... NOT A FRIEND TO SPEAK OF...

I'M REAL EXCITED.



SHUT UP. **BEEP BEEP BE-**

JOEY
ESCAPES

MY NAME IS ARIEL
CHYLDE...

...AND I'M OFFICIALLY THE
RICHEST GIRL IN SALEM,
MY NEW HOMETOWN, BUT
NOT BY CHOICE, MIND YOU.

WE MOVE AT LEAST ONCE
A YEAR, SOMETIMES
TWICE. MY DAD WON'T TELL
ME WHY AND I'VE LEARNED
TO STOP ASKING.

HIS A VERY
PRIVATE MAN...

...NOT THAT HE RESPECTS
OTHER PEOPLE'S PRIVACY,
THOUGH. HE'S DEVELOPED
A VERY ANNOYING HABIT
OF ENTERING MY ROOM
WITHOUT KNOCKING.

I USUALLY LOCK MY
DOOR WHEN HE'S
HOME, BUT SOMETIMES
I FORGET.

I WOULD'VE MOVED
IN WITH FRIENDS
LONG AGO IF I COULD
EVER STAY IN ONE
TOWN LONG ENOUGH
TO GET OVER MY
SHYNESS AND MAKE
ANY.

I'LL DEAL
THOUGH.

BE EIGHTEEN
SOON.

GRADUATED.

MY NEW LIFE AWAY FROM
HIM WILL BEGIN SOON
ENOUGH... THEN MAYBE THINGS
WILL BE BETTER.

HOW COULD THEY NOT?
MAYBE THEN THE NIGHT-
MARES WILL FINALLY STOP...

...LET'S HOPE.

SALEM HIGH SCHOOL.

MID-APRIL.

PERRY, I
HATE YOU.

I CAN'T GET OVER
YOUR PLAYING FOR UCLA
NEXT YEAR! I'D GIVE ANY-
THING TO BE IN CALIFOR-
NIA!

THAT'S RIGHT,
MY GOOD FRIEND ERIC.
I'M GONNA BE HANGIN' OUT
IN WESTWOOD TEACHIN' ALL
THOSE HOLLYWOOD HONEYS A
THING OR TWO ABOUT
SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY!
I CAN'T WAIT TO GET
OUT OF...

...THERE IS
A GOD.

WHAT'RE
YOU?!?

NEVER
MIND.

WHO IS
THAT?

PERRY, I'VE
ONLY SEEN HER
IN ONE PLACE...

YOUR
DREAMS?

YUP.

THAT IS, WITHOUT
A DOUBT, THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL GIRL I'VE
EVER HAD THE PLEASURE
OF LAYING MY EYES
ON.

SHE LOOKS
KINDA SAD FOR
SOME REASON,
THOUGH,
PERR.

WELL, I'LL
JUST HAVE TO
GO CHEER HER
UP THEN, WON'T
I?

WHICH BASICALLY
TRANSLATES INTO "FORGET
ABOUT HER, BECAUSE I'M
ALL OVER IT."

YOU'RE
PERCEPTIVE,
ERIC. THAT'S
WHY I LIKE
YOU.

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES
I'VE DANCED THIS DANCE IT
NEVER GETS ANY EASIER BEING
THE "NEW GIRL".

I HEAR THE TALK. THROW *SUBTLETY*
OUT THE WINDOW. THEY'RE NOT EVEN
TRYING TO BE DISCREET.

SHE'S
NEW ISN'T
SHE?

SHE *WOULD* HAVE
TO BE BEAUTIFUL...

I'LL DEAL.
IN SOON.
GRADUATED.

...LOOK
AT HER...

...STUCK
UP...

NOT WATCHING
WHERE SHE'S
GOIN'...

Ohhhh!

SORRY!

ODD.
DON'T YOU
THINK, MY
DEAR?

THE
WEATHER. HOW
COLD IT IS FOR
THIS TIME OF
YEAR. THE *CHILL*
IN THE AIR...

SOMETIMES WHEN YOU
MEET PEOPLE YOU
LIKE THEM IMMEDIATELY.

SOMETIMES ALSO
THE REVERSE IS
TRUE.

THIS GUY GAVE ME THE
MAJOR CREEPS. I'M
TALKIN' GOOSEBUMPS
WHERE YOU'RE NOT SUP-
POSED TO GET 'EM.

Ummm
YEAH,
SURE.

EXCUSE
ME. SORRY
TO RUN INTO
YOU.

CERTAINLY,
DEAR,
CERTAINLY.

THINK
NOTHING
OF IT...

SECOND PERIOD:

BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

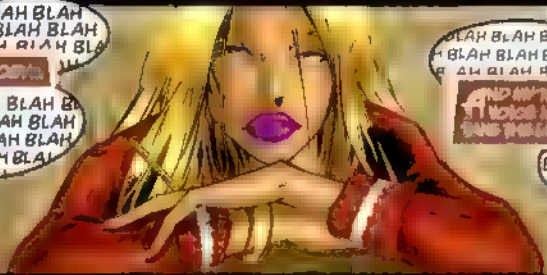
EMATE SLODOR!

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
AH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
H BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

BLAH BLAH BLAH
BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

AND MY MACHINE'S RECORDING
IT! VOICE ISN'T SOUNDING MUCH TO
THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE SYSTEM!

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
AH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

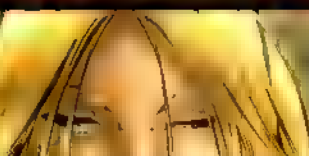


LAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

WHEN YOU ADD IN THE FACT THAT
I HAVEN'T HAD A SIGHT OF MY
CLASS IN WEEKS THEN YOU'RE
ASKING FOR TROUBLE!

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH
LAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

YOU'RE SURE ABOUT...



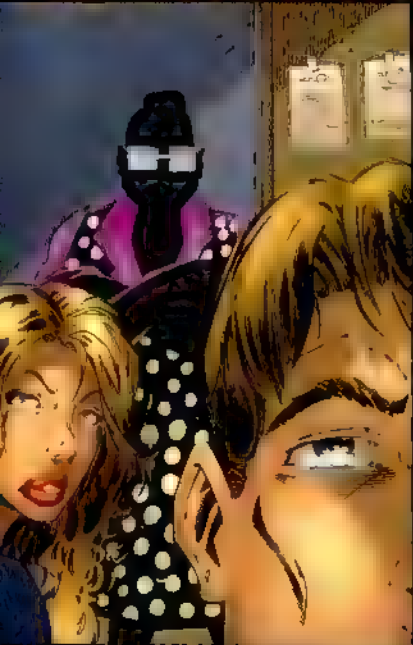
TO SUCK
YOUR BONES,
SPARROW!

I WANT
HER TOES!!

WON'T BE
LONG NOW,
SPARROW...

...WON'T BE...

Nooooooo!!

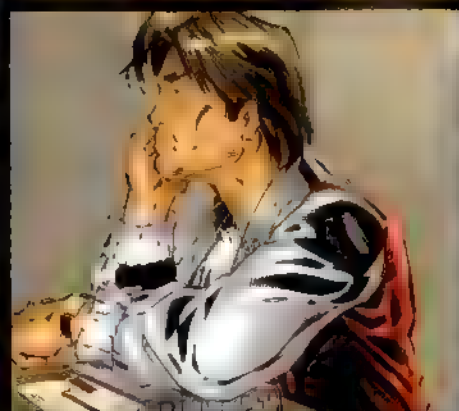


MS CHYLDE, I WOULD
APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD
MANAGE TO STAY AWAKE FOR
YOUR FIRST DAY IN MY CLASS!
YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY LEARN
SOMETHING!

I'M QUITE CERTAIN
THAT IS THE REASON WE
ARE ALL HERE!



YES, MS STONE
I'M QUITE CERTAIN,
TOO...



AFTER SCHOOL...

WHAT'RE YOU
DOIN', MAN? I'M
MAKIN' MY MOVE!

A WORD OF
CAUTION, PERR. I HEAR
SHE'S A LITTLE WEIRD.

WHAT'RE
YOU TALKIN'
ABOUT?

SHE SPACED
OUT IN SECOND
PERIOD...

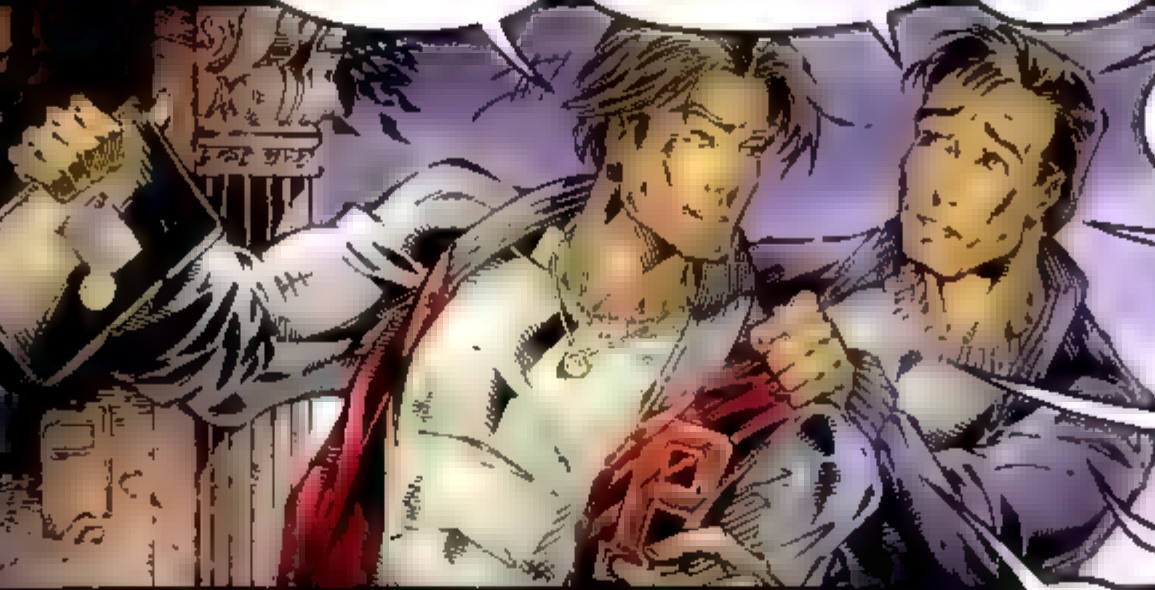
I WAS
THERE,
ERIC...

SHE'S RETRO,
DUDE SHE'S INTO JOURNEY.
YOU'RE A NINE INCH NAILS
KINDA GUY... IT WOULD
NEVER WORK.

YOU JUST WANT
HER FOR YOURSELF,
AND I HAPPEN TO LIKE
JOURNEY.

SINCE
WHEN?

SINCE
NOW.



HI

CONSIDER ME
FLATTERED, BUT SOME-
HOW I DON'T THINK
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME
YOU'VE USED THAT
ONE!

OKAY, I'M
BUSTED, BUT IT IS
THE FIRST TIME I'VE
SEEN YOU SMILE
ALL DAY.

FIRST TIME
I'VE HAD A
REASON.

MY NAME'S
PERRY STODGHILL.
I SAW YOU IN THE
PARKING LOT THIS
MORNING AND I'VE BEEN
LOSING MY MIND WANT-
ING TO TALK TO YOU
EVER SINCE--

WELL PERRY, I'M ARIEL
CHYLDE AND I THINK IT'S
PROBABLY SAFE TO SAY THAT
THE FEELING IS MUTUAL.
I'VE WANTED TO MEET
YOU TOO.

I'VE GOT TO HAND IT
TO YOU, THOUGH, NO ONE'S
EVER QUITE APPROACHED
ME LIKE THAT BEFORE.

I FIND THAT HARD
TO BELIEVE. I BET AT YOUR
OLD SCHOOL, YOU HAD
ALL THE GUYS GOING
CRAZY.

FAR
FROM
IT.

THEY WERE
PROBABLY JUST INTIMI-
DATED BY YOUR BEAUTY.

NO, I DON'T
THINK SO. I'M ACTUALLY
QUITE SHY... I SUPPOSE.

WELL, WE'LL JUST
HAVE TO SEE IF WE CAN'T
BRING YOU OUT OF THAT
SHELL OF YOURS A LITTLE.
DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS
FOR THIS WEEKEND?

UMMMM...
NO, I GUESS
NOT.

SOME OF THE
GUYS FROM THE TEAM
AND THEIR DATES ARE
HEADING DOWN TO THE
DAM FRIDAY NIGHT.
YOU WANNA GO?

AND WHAT
USUALLY GOES
ON AT THE DAM?

YOU KNOW, WE
HAVE A BONFIRE, COOKOUT,
SIT UNDER THE STARS, RE-
VEAL DEEP, TERRIBLE
SECRETS, HANG OUT...

AND IS THAT
ALL THAT GOES
ON?

WELL, NO,
BUT IT WILL BE
BETWEEN YOU
AND I... SCOUT'S
HONOR.

YOU
WERE A BOY
SCOUT?

NO... BUT
YOU DO HAVE
MY WORD,
PROMISE.

17



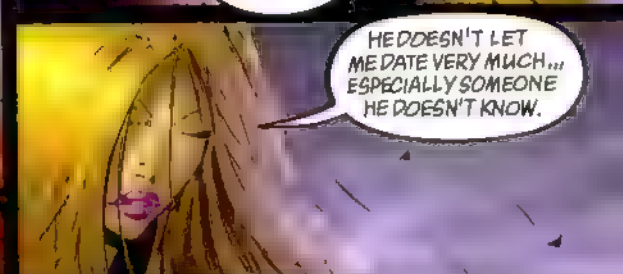
THE DAM IS BEAUTIFUL,
IT'S BEEN ONE OF MY FAVORITE
SPOTS SINCE I GOT TO THIS TOWN;
AND I'D REALLY LOVE TO,
PERRY, BUT I PROBABLY
SHOULDN'T...

C'MON ARIEL,
ALL THE GUYS ARE
WATCHING... AT
LEAST SHAKE YOUR
HEAD LIKE YOU
SAID YES.



PERRY, I
WANT TO, I
REALLY DO.
BUT MY
FATHER...

YOUR
FATHER...



HE DOESN'T LET
ME DATE VERY MUCH...
ESPECIALLY SOMEONE
HE DOESN'T KNOW.



WELL, I'LL
COME AND MEET
HIM.

WELL, NO...
THAT WOULDN'T
BE GOOD...

I'VE
GOT TO GO,
PERRY...

BYE.



CAN I
AT LEAST CALL
YOU???

THE BIG P
DOWN IN FLAMES!
I LOVE IT! NEVER
THOUGHT I'D
SEE THE DAY!

YEAH,
BLAZE OF
GLORY.

AT LEAST
YOU BROKE THE
ICE, ROMEO. SO
WHAT NOW?

WHAT NOW
IS PLAN B, LAUGHING
BOY. I'M GONNA
WAIT TILL DARK AND
THEN I'M GONNA
SERENADE HER.
IT WORKED ON
MARSHA.

PERRY,
YOU DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHERE SHE
LIVES

I'LL
FIND
OUT.

W 10:40
KRLD

THE HOTTEST AND MOST
POPULAR GUY IN SCHOOL
ASK YOU OUT AND WHAT DO
YOU DO?

DO YOU THANK YOUR
LUCKY STARS AND TELL
HIM YOU'D LOVE TO GET
TOGETHER WITH HIM? OR
DO YOU GET NERVOUS AND
RUN OFF LIKE AN IDIOT?

I AM AN
IDIOT.

I SHOULD HAVE
MY DAMN HEAD
EXAMINED.



I SHOULD

THUMP!

CAR DOOR. DAD MUST
BE HOME. GREAT. DAD.
THAT'S A GOOD ONE. I
USUALLY JUST CALL HIM
ROBERT. HE HATES IT, BUT
DAD JUST DOESN'T
FEEL COMFORTABLE.

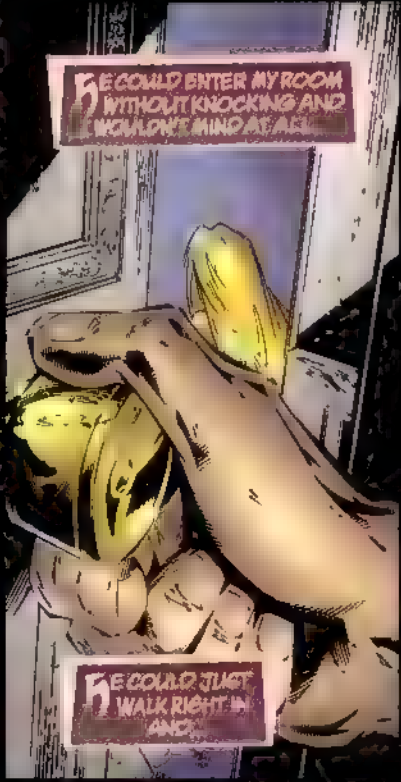
IT'S FUNNY, SOMETIMES I
FEEL LIKE HE'S NOT EVEN MY
REAL FATHER AT ALL. JUST
A MAN WITH THE TITLE.

I'M SURE IF PERRY WERE
HERE HE'D CHASE THESE
BLUES AWAY.





HE COULD WALTZ
RIGHT UP THOSE
STAIRS...



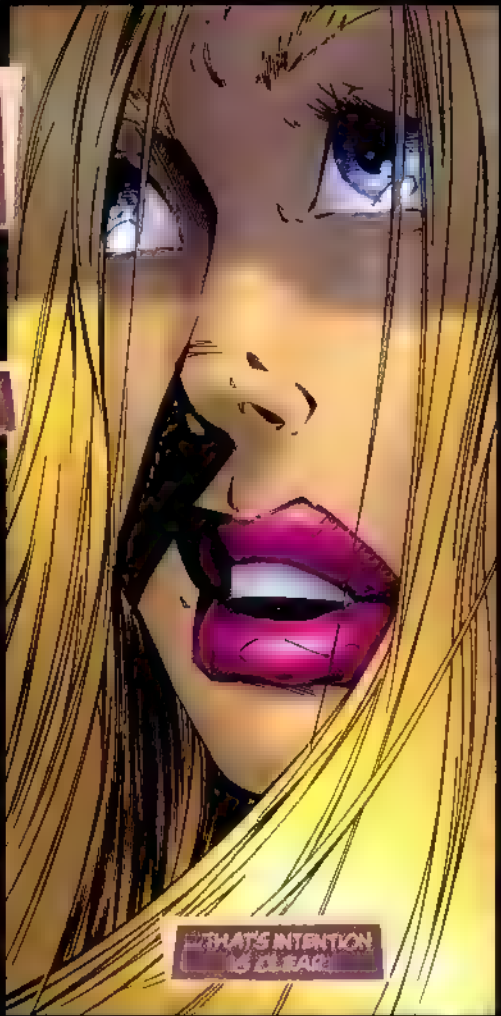
HE COULD ENTER MY ROOM
WITHOUT KNOCKING AND
WOULDN'T MIND AT ALL...

HE COULD JUST
WALK RIGHT IN
AND...



NO WORDS ARE
SPOKEN, BUT
"ROBERT" HAS A
FAR-AWAY LOOK IN
HIS EYES THAT
SPEAKS VOLUMES...

IT'S A LOOK
SADLY...



THAT'S INTENTION
IS CLEAR...

THIS IS IT
OKAY, HOTSHOT,
TIME TO PUT YOUR
MONEY WHERE
YOUR MOUTH
IS.

BOY, IS
SHE GOING TO BE
SURPRISED!

GET OFF OF
ME! ROBERT,
PLEASE! PLEASE
DON'T DO
THIS!

I BEG
YOU!
DON'T...

HE DOESN'T RESPOND

NOT WITH WORDS,
BUT THE COLD, DISTANT
RAGE IN HIS EYES...

GET
OFF
ME!

...CAN ONLY BE
REASONED...

GET
OFF...

.. WITH A RAGE MORE
POWERFUL THAN HIS OWN

ME!

SWAK!

WUNGGHHH!!



A-A-REL...WH-WHAT'S
HAPPENING?!?!?

NOTHING
MUCH,
"DADDY"...

...NOTHING
MUCH AT ALL...

JUST YOU DYING!!!

OH MY GOD, ARIEL, DON'T...



AAAH!!!





NEVER
LIKED HIM
ANYWAY!

ARIEL?!

JESUS! PERRY,
I THINK THAT'S YOUR
CUE TO GET THE HELL
OUT OF HERE!

THAT'S A
GOOD ONE.

HELL...

NO, NOT
HELL, SON.

CLOSE, BUT
THIS WILL BE
BETTER...

... MORE INTERESTING.



TO BE CONTINUED...



Image

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1st

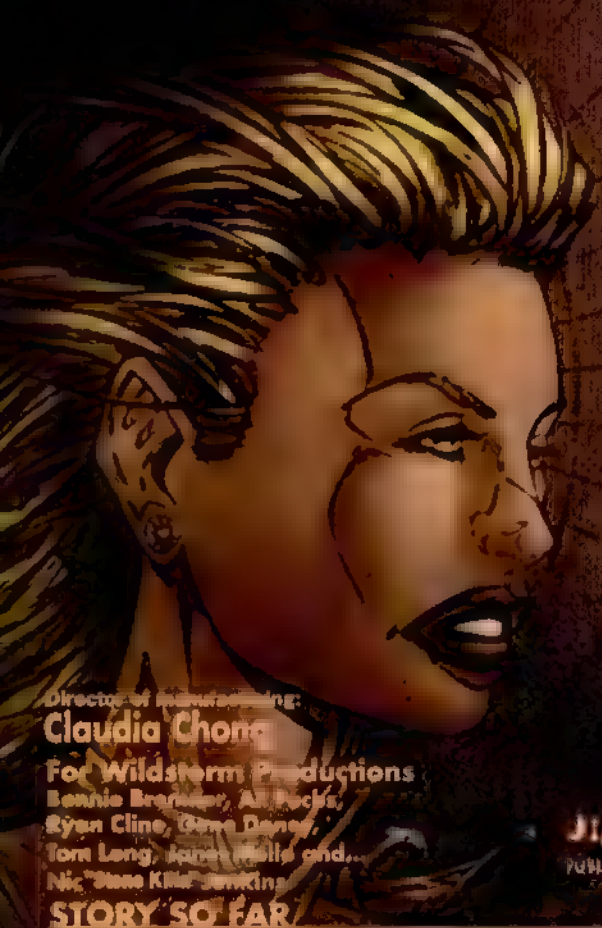
REMASTERED

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DARKCHYLDE

#2 REMASTERED



RANDY QUEEN

THE MAN

JASON CORRIE

MAPLE ALQUIZA

WIFE

JIMMY YU

EVERYTHING COLOR

KEN CHA

YOUR FATHER

TODD KLEIN

LETTERING

BRETT EVANS

DESIGNS

TRAVIS OSCARSON

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

JOHN LAYMAN

EDITOR

JIM LEE

PUBLISHER

SCOTT DUMBIER

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Director of manufacturing:

Claudia Chong

For Wildstorm Productions

Bonnie Brainerd, Al Puck, Ryan Cline, Gene Dancy,

Tom Long, James Mills and...

Nic "Stone Killer" Jenkins

STORY SO FAR

Having recently moved to the town of Salem, Georgia, Ariel Chylde felt the indifferent stares and the lonely pangs that come to every teen going to a new school. Plagued with unusual, recurring nightmares, her dreams were filled with strangely familiar demonic figures, seemingly hell-bent on her capture. Encountering a young man named Perry Stodghill while at school, Ariel felt an instant attraction to him, but was afraid to see him because of her fear of her overprotective father. Awakening the dark pathways within her soul, Ariel Chylde began her unwitting descent into darkness to prevent her father from molesting her one night by channeling the form of a demon from the Nightmare Realm and brutally slaying him. Her new house, burned to the ground with his death, a symbolic cleansing of all that has gone before. Her journey begins...

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SOME OF
US ARE BENIGN,
ARIEL.

THERE ARE POLITICS
AND WARRING FACTIONS
EVEN IN THE NIGHTMARE
REALM.

WE AREN'T
ALL ON THE SAME
SIDE, ARIEL.

BUT STILL,
UNBECOMING TO
YOU, YOU'VE GIVEN
OUR ENEMIES A
VICTORY THEY'VE
LONG ANTICI-
PATED.

ARIEL...

...HOW
COULD YOU
HAVE KNOWN?
AFTER ALL, YOU
DIDN'T CHOOSE
ANY OF THIS.

INSTEAD...

YOU
WERE THE ONE
CHOSEN.

AND NOW THINGS ARE
SET IN MOTION. MY DEAR,
THINGS I COULD HARDLY HAVE
ANY CONTROL OVER. THERE IS
A STORM BREWING ON THE
HORIZON... A TASTE OF
DREAD AND ANTICIPATION
ON THE WIND...

AND IT IS
MOVING CLOSER.
SIDES ARE BEING
CHOSEN, LINES ARE
BEING DRAWN,
AND SOON...

...SOON WE
WILL ALL BE
ENGULFED IN
ITS TEMPEST.

IF YOU'VE
IMAGINED IT...

IF YOU'VE
DREAMT IT...

IF YOU'VE
FEARED IT...

IT IS HERE, AND IT IS
HERE IN MULTITUDES.

WELCOME TO THE NIGHTMARE
REALM! A PLACE THAT REEKS
OF OLD DEATH. A PLACE WHERE
ALL THE ATROCITIES OF THE MIND
GROW WEARY, HELD CAPTIVE AS
THEY ARE TO OUR OWN TORTURED
PSYCHES.

A PLACE WHOSE INHABITANTS
NOW CELEBRATE A LONG-
AWAITED TRIUMPH.

IT WAS
FANTASTIC,
ALL RIGHT!

PENANCE
SAID HE WOULD BE
THE FIRST TO GO,
ALL RIGHT!!
SAID THE WAR WAS
ALMOST OVER...

SHOT OUT OF
HERE LIKE A
BAT OUT OF
HELL, ALL
RIGHT!!

OR A
DEMON
FROM THE
NIGHTMARE
REALM!

SOON
OUR TURN WILL
COME AND WE
SHALL FOLLOW
PENANCE TO
THE VIRGIN
FRONTIER, ALL
RIGHT!!

WEARS THEM
MY PATIENCE, THAT
ONE DOES...

mine,
too.



IF I WAS BIGGER, I'D KILL HIM.

I COULD DO IT. I'M BIG.

SQUEEZE HIS SKULL LIKE A DOGGIE TOY, WATCH HIS EYES FLY OUT.

THAT'S GOOD. I LIKE THAT. IN FACT I'D **ALMOST** ENCOURAGE YOU, **WAR**. BUT UNTIL WE DECIDE WHERE OUR LOYALTIES WILL FALL, WE DON'T NEED THE ANIMOSITY THAT WOULD COME WITH SLAYING A CLAMMER...

...EVEN IF HE DESPERATELY NEEDS IT.

AGREED, **PIECE**. FOR NOW, **WAR** AND **PIECE** WILL CONTENT OURSELVES SIMPLY TO OBSERVE.

REMAIN **NON COMMITTAL**.

YES.

OUR WORLD.

LATE.

HAVE YOU EVER MET SOMEONE AND FELT DEEPLY AND INSTANTLY LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THEM, THAT THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF YOU SOMEHOW AND THAT INTRODUCTIONS ARE MERELY A FORMALITY?

NO? ME NEITHER... AT LEAST, NOT UNTIL TODAY.

HER NAME'S **ARIEL CHYLDE**. AND I HAVE INVITED HER DOWN TO THE OLD STEEL MILL DAM FOR A WEEKEND GATHERING WITH SOME FRIENDS.

IT'S A POPULAR LOCAL PARTY SPOT, AND THE SECURITY FENCES AND POSTED SIGNS DON'T DO MUCH TO DISSUADE US.

BUT WHATEVER SMASHED THROUGH THE GATE WAS NO YOUTH GONE WILD..

.. IT WAS SOMETHING BIG AND ANGRY.

BIG AND ANGRY ARE THE THING THAT KILLED **ARIEL'S** FATHER AND DESTROYED HER HOUSE EARLIER TONIGHT.

SO WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING HERE?

INSTINCT. PURE ANIMAL INSTINCT.

ALL YOU KNOW WHAT? IT'S NEVER ONCE BEEN WRONG.

NEVER ONCE.

AND WHEN I FIND HER
SICK AND VOMITING BY
THE RIVER BED IT ISN'T
RELIEF THAT FILLS
MY HEART.

SHE LOOKS UP AT
ME LIKE A BROKEN
FAIRY PRINCESS,
FALLEN IN THE NIGHT,
CONFUSION AND
PAIN LEAKING FROM
HER EYES.

SHE'S
BEAUTIFUL,
AND I
COULDN'T
TERRIFIED.

PERRY
PLEASE HELP
ME...

PERRY...

WHEN SHE SAYS "PLEASE HELP ME"
IT IS IN A WHISPER, AFRAID THAT IF
SHE'S TOO LOUD THE THINGS
THAT KILLED HER FATHER
WILL COME CHARGING OUT
OF THE SHADOWS SNAPPING
LIMBS AND THEN OUR BONES

NO MONSTER
COMES. THE ONLY
SOUND IS THE
RUNNING WATER
AND THE POUNDING
OF MY OWN HEART...

...THAT, AND
EVENTUALLY
MY OWN LAME
REPLY.

YOU...
YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO KILL
ME...

...ARE
YOU?

BRAVO, PERRY.
NOW SHE'S CRYING
UNCONTROLLABLY

I WANT TO TAKE HER
INTO MY ARMS AND
HOLD HER AND PROMISE
HER THAT NO MATTER
HOW CRAZY, THAT
EVERYTHING WILL BE
OKAY.

I WANT TO, SO
I DO. I TELL HER
EVERYTHING WILL
BE OKAY...

...BUT IN MY
HEART I DON'T
BELIEVE IT.

NOT EVEN
A LITTLE.

THE COMPOUND, BASE OF
OP FOR SENTRY:
PARANORMAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT.

JACK'S NOT A
HAPPY GUY.

EVEN AS HIS NAMESAKE PROVIDES HIM
WITH A MUCH-NEEDED DIVERSION ON
CELLULOID AS HE FINISHES UP WHAT'S
LEFT OF THIS MONTH'S FIELD REPORTS,
JACK AND LONG HOURS ARE OLD FR ENDS,
AND MOST TIMES HE FINDS THE QUIET IN
THE FACILITY LATE AT NIGHT PEACEFUL.

BUT PEACE, IT SEEMS, EVEN
TONIGHT, IS EVER-ELUSIVE.

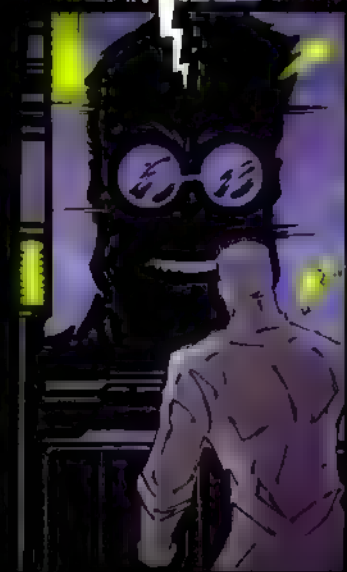
INCOMING
PRIORITY 7
VIDEO CALL
CHANNEL 12.

GO
AHEAD.

EYE IN THE SKY'S ON
FIRE, JACK. THIS LOOKS LIKE
SOMETHING MAJOR. HAPPENED
AROUND NINE O'CLOCK. THE
READINGS ARE OFF THE METER.
HOUSE EXPLODED, PSIONIC
AND ECTOPLASMIC
RESIDUE FOR MILES.

THE HOUSE WAS
RECENTLY SOLD TO THIS
MAN: A "ROBERT DAVID
CHYLDE", WHO WAS IN-
CINERATED, PRESUMABLY
IN THE BLAST.

THE ONLY OTHER
RESIDENT WAS A
DAUGHTER, ARIEL
LYNN CHYLDE.
AGENTS ON SIGHT
OBTAINED THESE
PHOTOS.



MISSING:

ASHLEIGH CHYLDE

AGE: 17

EYES: BLUE

HAIR: BLONDE

HEIGHT: 5'10"

RESIDENCE:

1707 HIGHROCK CT

SALEM, GA 30459

REAL LOOKER, HUH?
NEIGHBORS PLACE THE GIRL
AT HOME BEFORE THE BLAST,
BUT AS OF YET THERE HASN'T
BEEN A TRACE.

AND YOU
WANNA HEAR THE
BEST PART?

NO, I
ENJOY HAVING
MY TIME
WASTED.

YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE
THIS...IT HAPPENED IN A
WEALTHY SUBURB, IS MILES
FROM YOUR HOUSE, JACK.
RIGHT HERE IN GOOD OL'
SALEM, GEORGIA.

SALEM.
CONVENIENT.
GOOD A PLACE
AS ANY FOR A
WITCHHUNT,
I GUESS.

IF THERE'S
ANSWERS TO BE
FOUND, FINDING HER
IS A SAFE BET. NOTIFY
YOUR FIELD AGENTS
AND POUR YOURSELF
A HOT ONE,
FRIEND...

"THIS NIGHT
JUST GOT A LITTLE
LONGER."

HOWARD STERN TRUCK STOP, WHERE WEARY TRUCKERS STEAL WHAT BLEEP THEY CAN, AND TOSS A CRUMB OR TWO TO THE LIONS GROWLING IN THEIR STOMACHS.

THIS IS THE BEST DAMN CHICKEN SANDWICH I'VE EVER TASTED, EDDIE!

GREAT.

COULD BE CAUSE I'M SO DAMN HUNGRY...

THAT'S GREAT.

HELL, YOU COULD SLAP SOME KETCHUP ON A PIECE OF CARDBOARD RIGHT NOW AND I'D...DID YOU HEAR THAT?

HEAR WHAT?

BUT SOMETHING ELSE HAS FOUND ITS WAY HERE ON THIS STILL APRIL NIGHT, AND THE LOW GROWLING SOUND IT MAKES HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH HUNGER.

THERE IT IS AGAIN...

YOU'RE HEARIN THINGS...

MO HE'S NOT!!!





KNEW IT WOULDN'T
TAKE YOU LONG TO MAKE
SOME NOISE.

YOU?!?

ACTUALLY I GAVE YOU
MORE CREDIT THAN I SHOULD
HAVE, *PENANCE*. I THOUGHT
YOU WOULD'VE FIGURED IT
OUT MUCH SOONER.

BUT THEN
AGAIN, YOU NEVER
WERE VERY
QUICK.

WHY DON'T
WE SEE HOW QUICKLY
I CAN CHWEE YOUR DAMN
SKULL IN HALF,
KAULDRON??!

I'M SURE THAT WOULD BE
INTERESTING, BUT TIME IS OF THE
ESSENCE AND WE'VE GOT WORK
TO DO SO I'M AFRAID I'M GOING
TO HAVE TO ROB YOU OF THAT
PARTICULAR PLEASURE.

I REALLY
HATE YOU.

YOU DO
REMEMBER
THIS, DON'T
YOU?

IT'S
OKAY.

THE CHYLDE
RESIDENCE...

IS
THAT THE
FATHER?

THIS IS
WHAT'S LEFT
OF THE
FATHER.

NO
TRACE OF THE
GIRL?

NO
TRACE OF THE
GIRL...

DOESN'T TAKE LONG
FOR THE VULTURES TO SHOW
UP, DOES IT? I KNOW WE'RE
ALL INCOMPETENT AND
SKEPTICAL DOWN HERE, BUT
SURELY YOU'D LET US
GET THE DAMN--

LET'S NOT MAKE
THIS **PERSONAL** SHALL
WE, GUY? YOU **KNOW**
WE DON'T STICK OUR NOSES
IN UNLESS WE'VE GOT A
HELL-VA GOOD REASON.
SO WITHOUT GOING INTO
THINGS THAT ARE REALLY
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS,
WE'VE GOT A HELL-
VA GOOD REASON
TO!

JACK, MY MEN
ARE **WELL** IN CONTROL
HERE, WE DON'T NEED
GENTRY WATCHDOGS
BREATHING DOWN
OUR NECKS!

GET IT STRAIGHT,
GUY. I HAVE TACTICAL
COMMAND FROM ON HIGH
IN THIS MATTER WHICH
SUPERCEDES YOUR RANK,
WHICH IN LAYMAN'S TERMS
MEANS I'M IN CHARGE
OF THIS **OP** NOW.

SO AS MUCH AS
YOU'D **LOVE** TO THINK
THIS IS **PERSONAL**, IT REALLY
ISN'T AND THIS NIGHT ISN'T
GETTING ANY SHORTER,
SO MAKE A DECISION!

FU2

PERRY'S HOUSE:-

ARIEL...

AR EL,
ARE YOU
OKAY?

NO.

LISTEN, I'VE GOT
SOME CLOTHES LAID
OUT FOR YOU AND I MADE
SOME CHICKEN SOUP
WHEN YOU'RE DONE - MAY-
BE IF YOU GET SOME FOOD
IN YOUR STOMACH
YOU'LL FEEL BETTER.

THE FUNNY THING IS THAT I REALLY WANT THIS ALL TO TURN OUT TO BE A BOMBING SCENE.

TO ENTER MY ROOM WITHOUT
KNOCKING AND TELL ME I'M
LATE FOR SCHOOL.



B **COULD BE DEAD**
FROM A NIGHTMARE
FRID HIM GOOD, BUT THIS
IS NO NIGHTMARE



SPLASHING DOWN ON ME
WASHING THIS BLOOD AWAY

GOD BLESS YOU, IT'S
GONNA TAKE MORE

RRRING
RRRING

C'MON... PICK UP... I NEVER
CALL YOU AT WORK, AND THE
ONE TIME I DO...

YES?

DAD, I'VE GOT
KIND OF A SITUATION
HERE, I REALLY NEED
YOU HOME.

WELL, I'VE GOT
A KIND OF SITUATION
HERE, SON. WHAT IS
IT?

DAD, LISTEN. I JUST
REALLY NEED YOU HOME
NOW. TRUST ME, IT'S VERY
IMPORTANT AND YOU'VE
GOT TO GET HERE NOW.

PERRY, I HAVE MY HANDS
FULL RIGHT NOW, SO IF THIS ISN'T
A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH
I'M AFRAID IT--

DAD?

IT IS
LIFE AND
DEATH.



IS SHE
HERE?

YES I TOLD YOU
I COULD TRACK HER FROM
OUR PREVIOUS UNION, YOU
BASTARD

AND IT'S A
REAFFIRMATION OF
OUR PARTNERSHIP THAT
FOR ONCE YOU KNOW
WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT.

WE'RE **NOT**
PARTNERS.

LABEL IT AS YOU LIKE,
PENANCE. BUT YOU BELONG
TO ME NOW AND YOU'LL DO AS
I WILL YOU TO. AND REMEMBER,
SIMPLETON, YOU'RE NOT TO KILL
ARIEL, JUST PROVOKE HER
INTO CHANGING AGAIN.

AND WHAT ABOUT
ANYONE WHO GETS
IN MY WAY?

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE
MY SLAVE, I'M NOT SO IN-
SENSITIVE AS TO ROB YOU
OF YOUR FUN.

GOAD ARIEL INTO THE CHANGE BY
WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY. THAT IS OUR
GOAL THIS EVENING, PENANCE. SIMPLE HIT AND
RUN OPERATION. SIMPLE EVEN FOR YOU.



I WILL
KILL YOU
KAULDROM.

NO YOU
WON'T.

SOON, LIKE YOU, THE
ENTIRE NIGHTMARE REALM
WILL BE UNDER MY RULE,
RIGHT HERE ON **EARTH**
WHERE I WAS EXILED.
FUNNY HOW THE TIDES
CAN CHANGE, ISN'T
IT?

HOWEVER CAREFULLY
YOU SLIP AWAY FROM THE PAST,
IT ALWAYS HAS A WAY OF
CATCHING UP TO YOU, DOESN'T
IT? AND HERE YOU THOUGHT
YOU'D SEEN THE LAST
OF ME.

I'D
HOPED.

YOU
HOPED IN
VAIN.

LISTEN ARIEL, MY FATHER IS A VERY INTELLIGENT, VERY RESOURCEFUL MAN. WE'RE GOING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON... YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GO TO JAIL... I PROMISE...

I DON'T KNOW HOW...

...BUT I PROMISE WE'RE GOING TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS. YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY...

HE TRIES TO BE COMFORTING. HE TRIES TO SAY THE RIGHT THINGS... AND HE DOES MAKE A GREAT CHICKEN SOUP...

ANDREW TRYING REALLY HARD NOT TO CRY IN FRONT OF HIM...

TRYING REALLY HARD NOT TO CRY...

BUT I BREAK DOWN ANYWAY...

PERRY, I'M SO AFRAID... I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS.

IT'S OKAY.

IT'S NOT OKAY. I JUST WANT TO BE NORMAL. I JUST WANT TO GO TO MY SENIOR PROM... I JUST WANT TO GRADUATE, PERRY, AND MOVE AS FAR AWAY FROM HERE AS POSSIBLE.

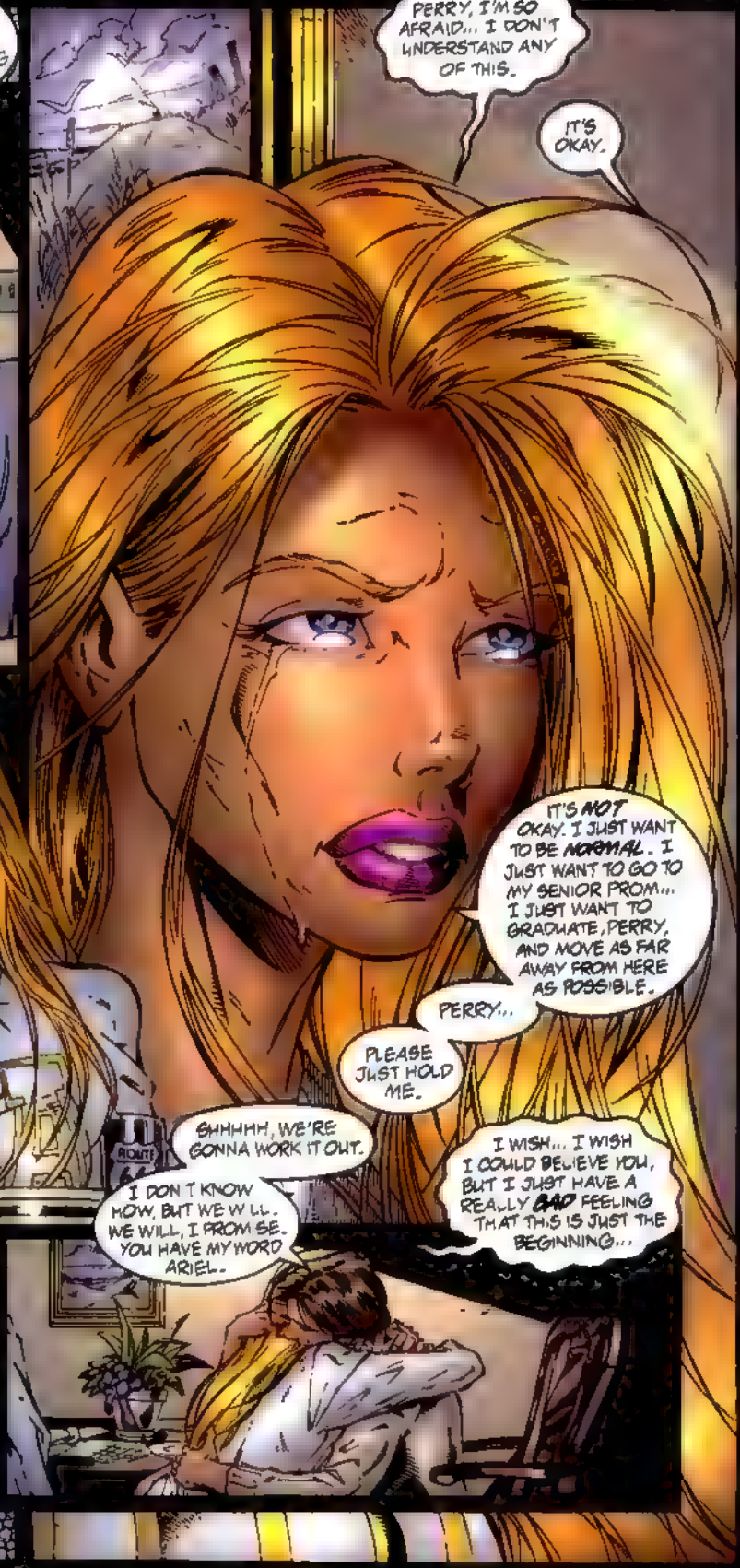
PERRY...

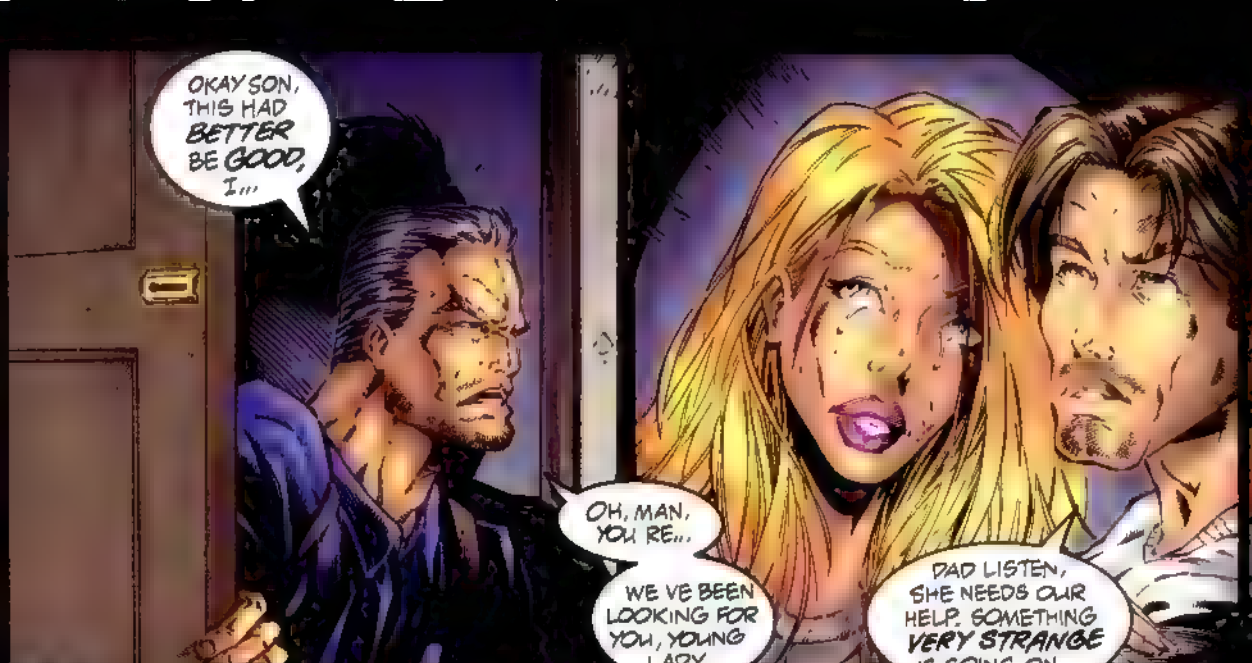
PLEASE JUST HOLD ME.

SHHHHH, WE'RE GONNA WORK IT OUT.

I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT WE WILL. WE WILL, I PROMISE. YOU HAVE MY WORD, ARIEL...

I WISH... I WISH I COULD BELIEVE YOU, BUT I JUST HAVE A REALLY BAD FEELING THAT THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING...





OKAY SON,
THIS HAD
BETTER
BE GOOD,
I...

OH, MAN,
YOU'RE...

WE'VE BEEN
LOOKING FOR
YOU, YOUNG
LADY.

DAD LISTEN,
SHE NEEDS OUR
HELP. SOMETHING
VERY STRANGE
IS GOING ON...

KERASHHHH!



KID,
YOU DON'T
KNOW THE
HALF OF
IT!



HAVEN'T
WE MET BEFORE,
SPARROW?

NOT ANY-
MORE, IDIOT. WE'RE
DIVORCED.

ARIEL?!?
ISN'T THAT
YOU?!?

GET
DOWN!

BLAM
BLAM

SMACK!

SHUT
UP!



I'M GOING TO
KILL THE BOTH OF
YOU, FATHER AND
SON! AND I'M GOING
TO START WITH STUD-
MUFFIN, HERE!



OH NO...



HUHHHHKKK! OHHH
GOD!!! OH GOD PLEASE
NO!!! PLEASE NOT AGAIN!!!
PLEASE!!!

INSIDE HER SOUL ARIEL
FEELS A DEEP AND TERRIBLE
ABYSS YAWN WIDE ...

... AND SOMETHING
WICKED IN THE DARKNESS
SMILES AND REACHES
OUT TO HER.

NOOOOO!!

LET GO OF MY
SON OR I SWEAR TO
CHRIST I'LL SEND YOU
STRAIGHT BACK TO
WHATEVER HELL
SPAWNED YOU!!

STEP ASIDE, MR.
STODGHILL!!!

WELL
TAKE IT
FROM
HERE!



image

3

NOV

2

ALL
STAR

DARKHYDE

Remastered



QUEEN
GORDER

DARKCHYLDE

#3 REMASTERED



RANDY QUEEN

THE MAN

JASON GORDER

MARLO ALQUIZA

STAN JARSONE

INKS

JIMMY YU

EVERYTHING COLOR

KU CHA

PHOTO FENCIBLE

TODD KLEIN

LETTERING

BRETT EVANS

DESIGNS

TRAVIS OSCARSON

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

JOHN LAYMAN

EDITOR

JIM LEE

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

SCOTT DUMBER

GROUP EDITOR

For Wildstorm Productions:

Bonnie Bremner, Clouding Chang,

Ryan Cline, Mike Cho, Tom Long,

Nic Jenkins, Janet Mella and...

Mean Gene "Dance Machine" Doney

STORY SO FAR

Awakening the dark pathways within her soul, the 17-year-old Ariel Chylde has begun her unwitting descent into darkness by channeling the form of the demon Pennance from the Nightmare Realm and brutally slaying her vicious father before he could molest her. Fleeing into the woods to escape the horror she's become, Ariel becomes embroiled in the internal conflicts of the Nightmare Realm as War, Piece, Flatulence and many others discuss the revelation of the Darkchylde and her impact on the politics of their realm. Able to return to earth after being channeled by Ariel, Pennance arrives and is tracked by the human-looking being known as Kauldron. Controlling Pennance with an ancient medallion, the fearsome duo track Ariel to Perry Stodghill's house where Ariel is forced to change once again...

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I DON'T
BELIEVE IT,
ALL RIGHT?

OF ALL THE DELIGHT-
FULLY WICKED MONSTROSITIES
FOR THAT DIRTY LITTLE MINX
TO CHOOSE FROM...

...DID SHE SUMMON
ME, FLATULENCE, THE
SNEAKIEST AND MOST
CLEVER OF ALL THE
NIGHTMARELINGS??

NO!

SHE CHOSE
HAIRBALL!!

HAIRBALL!!!

THAT VAIN, HOT-
TEMPERED, FLEABAG
EGOMANIAC!!

I ADMIT IT,
ALL RIGHT?!

I'M
JEALOUS.

FIRST PENANCE,
THEN HAIRBALL.
THAT PIECE OF
GARBAGE.

I WONDER
HOW MUCH FUN
THEY'RE HAVIN'...





EARLIER TONIGHT, IN AN ACT OF SELF-PRESERVATION FROM AN ABUSIVE FATHER, SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD ARIEL CHYLDE AWAKENED BLACK MAGIKS WITHIN HER-SELF, DORMANT SINCE BIRTH.

AND AS MUCH TO *HER* SURPRISE AS TO HER "SOON-TO-BE-BURNT-TO-A-CRISP" DADDY'S, SHE SUMMONED AND ASSUMED THE FORM OF SOMETHING LITERALLY RIGHT OUT OF A NIGHTMARE... THE FANGED AND CLAWED MONSTROSITY, **PENANCE**.

NOW, AFTER CASTING **PENANCE** BACK TO THE SHADOW WORLD OF HIS ORIGIN AND ASSUMING HER NATURAL FORM, THAT CREATURE HAS *SOMEHOW* FOUND HIS WAY *BACK*...

... FOUND HIS WAY HERE TO THREATEN THE LIFE OF ONE **PERRY STODGHILL**, WHO HAD GIVEN HER SHELTER

FOUND HIS WAY HERE TO PLACE IN DIRE JEOPARDY THE ONE THING THAT SEEMS TO MAKE THE MOST SENSE TO HER RIGHT NOW, IN THE HOPE OF GOADING ARIEL INTO SUMMONING YET ANOTHER CREATURE IN THEIR DEFENSE.

IT WORKED.

HE GOT WHAT HE WANTED.

SORT OF.



YOU
BITCH!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE YOU JUST
PUT YOUR HAND
THROUGH MY
CHEST!!

I'M GONNA DO
A LOT WORSE, PENANCE.
THAT TIME OF THE
MONTH IF YOU KNOW
WHAT I MEAN...

...NOW WOULD
YOU PLEASE PUT
PERRY DOWN NOW,
I KINDA LIKE THE
GUY!

YEAH?

YOU CAN
HAVE 'IM!!

0000F!

SON,
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

YEAH,
SURE...

...THE GIRL OF MY DREAMS HAS
JUST TURNED INTO A GIANT WEREWOLF
AND I ALMOST GOT MY HEAD BITTEN
OFF BY JURASSIC LARK OVER THERE.
NEVER BEEN BETTER

THANKS FOR
ASKING.

WELL, I'VE REALLY
GOTTA HAND IT TO YA, SON.
YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO
PICK 'EM!

"ARIEL'S HOUSE WRECKING
SERVICE: I'M CUTE, I'M PRO-
FICIENT, I USUALLY AVERAGE
ABOUT TWO HOUSES AN
EVENING..."

YOU'RE
HILARIOUS

I'M CALLING
IN AN ARMED
BACKUP

DO WHAT
YOU GOTTA
DO

I WOULDN'T SAY THIS IS A ROUTINE EVENING FOR
MY FATHER, BUT AS ONE OF THE RINGLEADERS
OVER AT SENTRY, HE'S HAD TO DEAL WITH THIS
PARTICULAR BRAND OF WEIRDNESS BEFORE.

BUT I'D SAY IT'S SAFE TO ASSUME THAT NEITHER OF
US HAVE EVER SEEN OR DEALT WITH ANYTHING LIKE THIS.

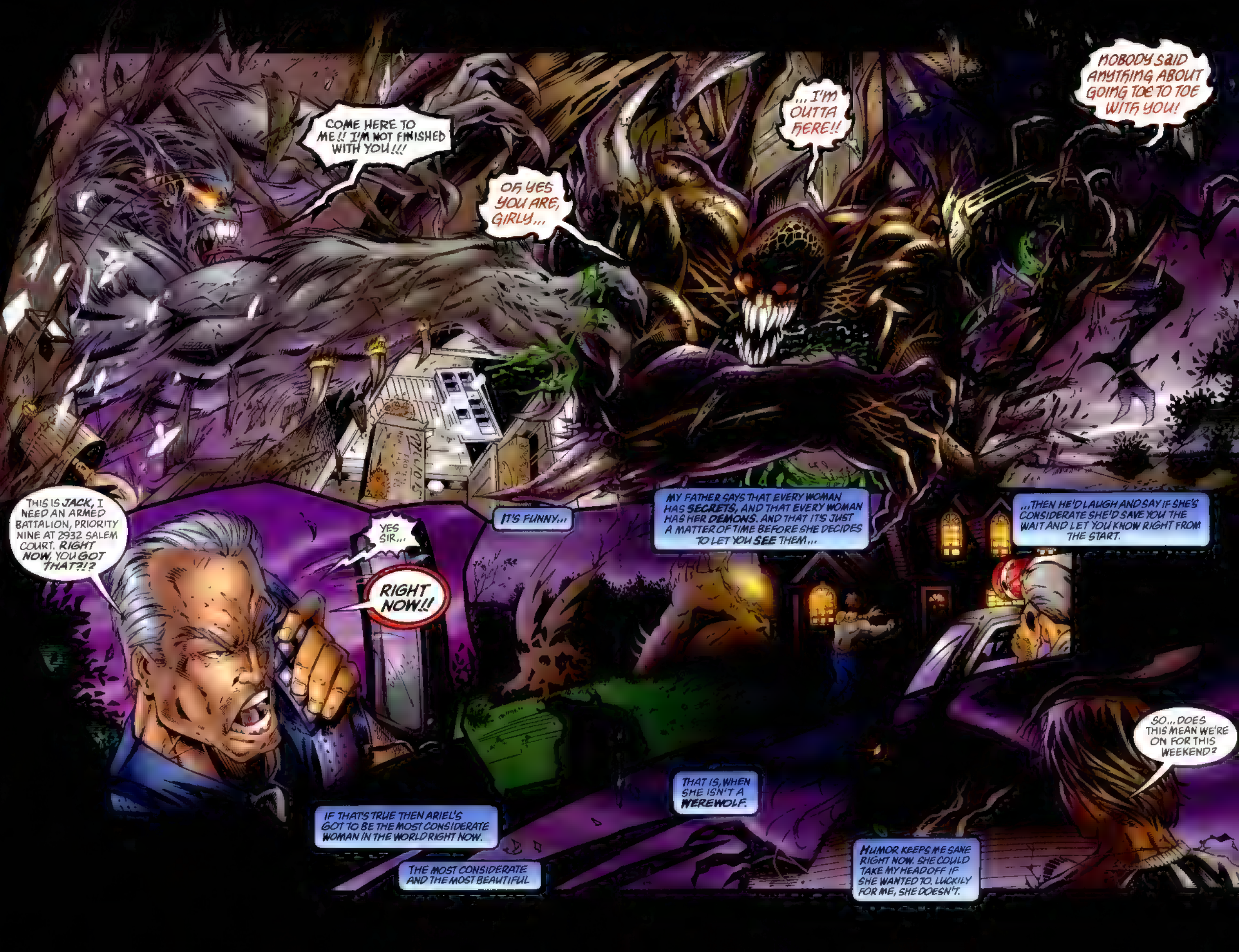
NO, BABY...

...THIS IS ALL NEW FOR
ALL INVOLVED.

THE ATHLETE, THE MERCENARY IN ME
IS INVIGORATED, FASCINATED. THE 18-
YEAR-OLD BOY IN ME WANTS TO
FINISH OFF WHAT'S LEFT IN MY BLADDER
AND RUN LIKE HELL, JUST LIKE THE SONG.

TRANSFIXED, I
DO NEITHER...

...ENTHRALLED AS I AM AT THE
DARK BALLET UNFOLDING BEFORE
MY UNBELIEVING EYES.



COME HERE TO ME!! I'M NOT FINISHED WITH YOU!!!

OF YES YOU ARE, GIRLY...

... I'M OUTTA FERE!!

NOBODY SAID ANYTHING ABOUT GOING TOE TO TOE WITH YOU!

THIS IS JACK, I NEED AN ARMED BATTALION, PRIORITY NINE AT 2932 SALEM COURT. RIGHT NOW, YOU GOT THAT?!!?

YES SIR...

RIGHT NOW!!

IT'S FUNNY...

MY FATHER SAYS THAT EVERY WOMAN HAS SECRETS, AND THAT EVERY WOMAN HAS HER DEMONS. AND THAT IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SHE DECIDES TO LET YOU SEE THEM...

...THEN HE'D LAUGH AND SAY IF SHE'S CONSIDERATE SHE'D SAVE YOU THE WAIT AND LET YOU KNOW RIGHT FROM THE START.

SO... DOES THIS MEAN WE'RE ON FOR THIS WEEKEND?

IF THAT'S TRUE THEN ARIEL'S GOT TO BE THE MOST CONSIDERATE WOMAN IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW.

THE MOST CONSIDERATE AND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL

THAT IS, WHEN SHE ISN'T A WEREWOLF.

HUMOR KEEPS ME SANE RIGHT NOW. SHE COULD TAKE MY HEAD OFF IF SHE WANTED TO. LUCKILY FOR ME, SHE DOESN'T.

PERRY...

...DON'T BE AFRAID

I AM NOT EVIL. I HOLD THE
TO THIS THOUGHT AS THE
CREATURES BLACK BLOOD
BEGINS TO DISSOLVE AND I
FEEL HIS PHYSICALITY GO
AWAY FROM ME

BUT EVEN AS MY THOUGHTS
THE HEART STROKES TO SLOW AND
THE TEMPEST SUBSIDES IN MY
HEAD AS THE RUSH OF POWER
FADES... SOMETHING ELSE
COMES OVER ME. CLEAR
CERTAINLY FRIGHTENING.

A CONSCIOUSNESS, AN
AWARENESS NEITHER
WHOLLY BELONGING TO ME
CREATURES I WAS, NOT
ENTIRELY TO THE GIRL I AM

I AM WHO
I WAS BORN
TO BECOME...

...THE WORLD
WEAVER, THE
CHANNELER OF
SHADOW...

...I AM
BEAUTIFUL...

...I AM
TERRIBLE...

...I AM THE

...I AM THE

OKAY

GREAT

NOW
WHAT?

A AND FOR A MOMENT, ONLY
A MOMENT, THE SICKNESS IN MY
IS GONE AND I FEEL EUPHORIA. I AM
HOLDING BREATH, I AM HOLDING MY
BREATH, I AM HOLDING MY BREATH
I AM HOLDING MY BREATH, I AM
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ALMOST AS SOON AS THE
AWARENESS COMES OVER
ME IT STARTS TO FADE

IT TAKES MY
CONSCIOUSNESS
WITH IT

PERRY...

ARIEL!

LIKE A WONDERFUL DREAM
WHICH SLIPS FASTER AND
FASTER AWAY FROM YOU THE
HARDER YOU TRY TO RE-
MEMBER IT. IT JUST LEAVES...

SON, IS
SHE...?

NO. SHE
JUST PASSED
OUT. DAD,
WE'VE GOT
TO DO SOME-
THING...

THE GARRISON IS
ON ITS WAY, THEY'RE
BRINGING A MEDICAL
UNIT... SON, SHE'LL
BE ALL RIGHT WE'RE
GOING TO GET TO
THE BOTTOM OF
THIS

SHE'S GOING
TO BE OKAY, I
PROMISE YOU

SOUNDS LIKE WHAT I
TOLD ARIEL MYSELF
EARLIER TONIGHT.

I HOPE I SAID THAT WITH
MORE CONVICTION.

THE NIGHTMARE REALM...

HAVE YOU
TWO MADE UP
YOUR MINDS?

COME BACK LATER.
WE'RE PLAYING POKER.
WE'LL TALK THEN, SAGE.
MAYBE.

DAHMMIT! I
DON'T WANT TO
DEAL WITH YOU
RIGHT NOW!!

WE'LL TALK NOW,
PIECE. WILL YOU HELP US?
WILL YOU HELP US TO HELP
HER?

WHAT'S IN IT
FOR YOU? WHY DO
YOU CARE SO MUCH
???

SO WHAT'S
YOURS? WHAT'S
IN IT FOR YOU,
AND WHY SHOULD
WE HELP
YOU?

LET ME
HANDLE
THIS..

..WE'RE NOT FOOLS.
WELL, MAYBE HE IS, BUT
WE'RE BOTH VERY AWARE
THAT EVERYONE HAS AN
AGENDA.

THE
DARKCHYLDE
HAS MANIFESTED.

I THINK JUST
ABOUT EVERYONE
IN DREAMLAND IS
VERY AWARE OF
THAT, LAST TIME
I CHECKED.

KAUDRON IS
EARTHBOUND.

I THINK JUST ABOUT
EVERYONE IN DREAMLAND
IS AWARE OF THAT, TOO!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IN-
TENTION OF TELLING ME
SOMETHING I DON'T
ALREADY KNOW?

THERE IS MUCH
YOU DON'T KNOW,
PIECE.

THRILL ME.

HE IS IN POSSESSION OF **THE RING OF SOLOMON**, WHICH ALLOWS THE BEARER TOTAL POWERS OVER ANY EARTHBOUND DEMONS.

OKAY, SO I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.

BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER, IT DOESN'T AFFECT US.

IT COULD BE YEARS BEFORE SHE SUMMONS EITHER OF...

SHE'LL BE DEAD. KAULDRON HAS ALREADY TAKEN POSSESSION OF **RENNANCE**. **FAIRBALL** WILL BE NEXT. HE'S USING ALL RETURNING **NIGHTMARE LINGS** TO GOAD THE **DARKCHYLDE** INTO USING HER POWERS, BY FORCE OR PHYSICAL HARM TO THOSE AROUND HER. HE COULDN'T RULE US HERE, SO HE'S USING THE **DARKCHYLDE** AS HIS GATEWAY TO PLUCK US OUT ONE BY ONE TO AMASS HIS FORCES THERE.

THAT GUY ALWAYS CREEPED ME OUT. GAVE US BOTH THE WILLIES, DIDN'T HE **WAR**?

YES. THE WILLIES.

THE **DARKCHYLDE** HAS NOT ACCUMATED TO HER POWERS. HER BODY IS GOING TO **BURN OUT** WITH SO MANY RAPID SUMMONINGS. **KAULDRON'S** OVER-ANXIOUS THIRST FOR REVENGE IS GOING TO DESTROY HIS MEANS OF ACHIEVING IT.

THEN YOU'LL NEVER BE SUMMONED, **PIECE**. YOU'LL ALWAYS BE HELD CAPTIVE HERE. AND I KNOW HOW YOU **RELISH** FREEDOM.

BUT WHAT'S IN IT FOR **ME**?

I'M OFFERING YOU THAT FREEDOM. I CAN GET YOU BOTH OUT OF HERE. EVEN NOW, **FAIRBALL** IS BEING CAST BACK. I KNOW WHERE AND WHEN HE'LL ARRIVE.

YOU AND **WAR** WILL WAIT FOR HIM TO REENTER THE VORTEX, AND WHEN HE DOES...

... YOU GRAB ONTO HIM AND HITCH A RIDE BACK. SIMPLE.

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS? WHAT MAKES YOU SO DAMN SMART, ANYWAY?

BECAUSE, **PIECE**... I'VE BEEN **EARTH-BOUND**.

OKAY, **BIRDY BIRD**. PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS. BUT F YOU'RE LYING.

... I'M GONNA TEAR YOUR WINGS OUT VERY SLOWLY.

THE WOODS,
EARTH...

NOW THERE'S
SOMETHING YOU
DON'T SEE EVERY
DAY...

... A CREEPY BASTARD WITH
GLOWING EYES LURKING IN THE
SHADOWS AT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE
MORNING. I HOPE YOU'RE FAPPY!

ACTUALLY, I'M
THRILLED. MY ARMY
WILL SOON BE TWO.

**GOTO FELL,
KAULDROM!**

WHY BOTHER,
WHEN I CAN BRING
IT TO ME.

Y'KNOW, I DON'T
CARE WHAT LITTLE
TRINKET YOU'VE GOT
AROUND YOUR NECK,
THIS IS ALL GOING TO
BLOW UP IN YOUR FACE.
YOU'RE NOT WHO
YOU THINK YOU
ARE!

REGARDLESS,
PENANCE, WE BOTH
KNOW WHO'S CALLING
THE SHOTS, DON'T
WE?

JUST YOU WAIT.
I WAS JUST GOING
TO KILL YOU BEFORE,
BUT NOW I'M GOING
TO TORTURE YOU

WE'LL
SEE.

YOU'RE
RIGHT.

**WE
WILL.**

ARIEL'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS, AS WE ENTER THE OUTER PERIMETER OF THE MAIN SENTRY COMPOUND HERE IN SALEM, GEORGIA, BUT SOMEWHERE ABOVE THE STATE POLICE AND JUST EAST OF THE F.B.I. IS WHERE SENTRY REALLY RESIDES

ARMED TO THE TEETH WITH SCIENTISTS, RESEARCHERS AND OTHER PARA-MILITARY TYPES, AND WITH MORE GOVERNMENT FUNDING THAN THEY'D CARE FOR THE PUBLIC TO KNOW, SENTRY'S FORTE IS ANYTHING THAT CONSTITUTES A "NON-CONVENTIONAL" THREAT.

ANYTHING ODD, OUT OF THE ORDINARY, STRANGE, UNUSUAL...

...THINGS LIKE BEAUTIFUL SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRLS WHO CAN SUMMON MONSTERS. THINGS LIKE THAT...

...THINGS LIKE ARIEL CHYLDE.

IT'S FUNNY. ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD I'M THE MAN, NO QUESTION. I'VE GOT THE MOVES AND I MAKE THE PLAYS. ASSERTIVE AND IN CONTROL...

BUT I FEAR THAT THIS A GAME BEING PLAYED OUT ON A MUCH BROADER SCOPE. ~~WHERE I'M FORCED TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES FEELING HELPLESS AND INADEQUATE AND HATING EVERY MINUTE OF IT.~~ SCOPE A GAME WHERE I'M FORCED TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES FEELING HELPLESS AND INADEQUATE AND HATING EVERY MINUTE OF IT.

FACE FACTS, PERRY. THIS IS AS OUT OF YOUR HANDS AS IT GETS. BUT COME HELL OR HIGH WATER, ARIEL NEEDS ME TO HELP HER SEE THIS THROUGH...

...AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LETTING HER DOWN.

THEY SAY THAT R.E.M.* BEGINS FOR MOST PEOPLE IN ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES. THAT PLACE BENEATH HEAVY EYELIDS WHERE YOUR BODY BEGINS TO HEAL ITSELF, RECHARGE... AND DREAM.

USUALLY IN TWENTY MINUTES THEY SAY...

IT TAKES ME LESS THAN FIFTEEN AND I'M THERE...

*RAPID EYE MOVEMENT.

HERE IN THAT PLACE
OF DREAD THAT IS
BECOMING FRIGHTENINGLY
FAMILIAR.

WELCOME TO MY LAIR,
SPARROW. YOU ARE IN NO
DANGER HERE. I AM
FANG, OF COURSE.

OF COURSE.

YOU SAVED ME
IN MY DREAM BEFORE.
WHY?

DREAM?

YES, FANG.
A DREAM, LIKE
I'M DREAMING
NOW.

ARE YOU? MAYBE I'M THE
DREAMER AND YOU'RE THE
DREAM, LITTLE GIRL. HAS THAT
EVER OCCURRED TO YOU? THAT
WOULD BE AN INTERESTING
TWIST, WOULDN'T IT?

NO. MY
LIFE... IS REAL,
DRAGON.

SAYS WHO,
SPARROW?!

HOW PRECIOUS LITTLE YOU
UNDERSTAND. THE UNIVERSES AND ALL
THEY ENCOMPASS ARE NOTHING BUT A
TAPESTRY OF MYSTERIES. AND YOUR
FATE WAS DETERMINED BEFORE YOU
WERE EVEN BORN.

WHAT'RE YOU...

SAD, ISN'T IT? THE SACRIFICES SOME
PEOPLE MAKE... AND THE INEVITABLE REGRET
WHICH FOLLOWS. THE BLISSFUL IGNORANCE
OF YOUTH... NOT UNDERSTANDING THE CONSE-
QUENCES, THE RAMIFICATIONS OF YOUR
ACTIONS... OR HOW THEY WILL ULTIMATELY
EFFECT THOSE AROUND YOU.

YOU'RE
TALKING IN
RIDDLES.

AREN'T I?

THERE IS A REASON WHY
I AM FEARED, SPARROW. I SAVED
YOU ONCE BEFORE, BECAUSE IT
WAS IN MY BEST INTEREST. IT IS
STILL IN MY BEST INTEREST TO
HELP YOU. I CAN SAVE YOU AGAIN,
BUT THERE IS A DANGER. THERE
IS A DANGER AND THERE IS
A PRICE...

DEAR GIRL,
THERE IS ALWAYS
A PRICE.

WHAT DANGER,
WHAT PRICE,
FANG?

TELL
ME.



TELL ME...

WHAT IS IT, ARIEL? TELL YOU WHAT?

THAT YOU'RE FALLING MADLY IN LOVE WITH ME... AND THAT... YOU'RE GOING TO BE... MY... KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR...

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE SHINING ARMOR, BUT YOU DO KNOW HOW TO MAKE QUITE THE IMPRESSION ON A POOR FELLA

SHHHHH... DON'T TRY TO TALK JUST YET. YOU'RE STILL FEVERISH. YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS, AND YOU'RE WITH THE BEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD EQUIPPED TO TAKE CARE OF YOU...

PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME...

PERRY... WHERE... AM I?

SINCE YOU ASKED SO NICELY...

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE

ACTUALLY YOU ARE. I NEED YOU TO COME WITH ME AND ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE EVENTS YOU AND YOUR FATHER WITNESSED TONIGHT

THE NIGHTMARE
REALM...

JUST
LIKE I SAID
RIGHT ON
SCHEDULE...

YUP.

IT'S TURNED
OUT TO BE YOUR
LUCKY DAY, BIRD
BRAIN.

IT'S
SAGE.

WHATEVER.
AT ANY RATE...

ENOUGH
TALK, LET'S
MOVE!

...IT LOOKS
LIKE YOU GET TO
KEEP YOUR
WINGS.

I HAVE
ENOUGH CROSSES
TO BEAR WITHOUT
BLOWING THIS
ONE!

NNNNNEEEEOOONNN

HI,
HOWYA
DOIN'?

TH-DUMP!

BUMRUSH!!

AHHHHH, YES
THEY ARE SNEAKY,
ALL RIGHT?

BUT FLATULENCE
IS SNEAKIER
STILL.

EARTH.

WE'RE THROUGH!

YEAH, THANKS JACK!

YES, THANKS.

HUHRRUUGH?

HHRRUUGH?

HUURRGHH?

AND, OH YES...
**WELCOME TO
THE PARTY!**

SUCKS,
DOESN'T
IT?

AT LEAST YOU
DON'T HAVE A
GIANT HOLE IN
YOUR CHEST!

SENTRY
COMPOUND:

YOU HAVE A THUMPACHE
SO, SEE A DOCTOR

YOU NEED A DENTY ALSO,
GO TO A DENTIST

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SUMMON MONSTERS
OUT OF YOUR NIGHTMARES, YOU'RE LOCKED
UP BY A GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION IN A HIGH
TECH HOLDING CELL

COULD I BREAK OUT OF HERE?
WELL YES I COULD, EASY!

THEN THEY'D KILL ME, THEY'D BLAST ME
DEAD WITH THOSE GUNS AND GLIDERS
THAT LOOK LIKE LEFTOVERS FROM A STAR
WARS SET

YEAH, I COULD GET OUT OF HERE, BUT
THE THING IS, I DON'T WANT TO

FACT IS, I'M SCARED
I AND I'M JUST AS CON
FUSED AS THEY ARE

THEY WANT TO RUN TESTS
THEY WANT TO PICK ME APART
I'M GOING TO BE OBFUSCATED... I'M
GOING TO LET THEM

I'M GOING TO LET THEM
BECAUSE THESE GUYS
CAN'T HELP ME-- SOME OF
THE BEST DOCTORS AND RE
SEARCHERS MONEY CAN BUY--
IT'S DOUBTFUL ANYONE CAN

THEY TOLD ME TO TRY AND REST
(YEAH, RIGHT) WHILE THEY PREP
THEIR EXAMINATIONS AND TRY TO
FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY'RE GOING
TO DO WITH ME

DO TO ME

MY SENIOR PROM IS
IN TWO WEEKS

AND ALL THOSE KIDS
THERE WILL HAVE NO
IDEA HOW LUCKY THEY
ARE TO EXPERIENCE
SOMETHING SO SIMPLE

SO SPECIAL

IN TWO WEEKS THEY'LL BE
LAUGHING AND DANCING
AND TALKING ABOUT THE
FUTURE

I WISH I COULD BE
THERE WITH THEM

YEAH, DO

QUEEN

GORDER

YU

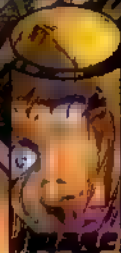
KIPKE

DARKHYDE



DOUGLASS
SIMPSON

Jimmy



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\$3.45
CANADA

Image Comics and Majesty Graphics
presents

Part 4

"Shelter Me"

Randy Queen

he created, drew and wrote it

Jason Gorder

I'm keeping
up with you
he inked it

Jimmy Yu

he painted it

Codd Klein

Get me
the scans
he lettered it

Julia Simmons

Melanie Simmons

they stayed on us

for image comics

Larry Marder

executive director



image

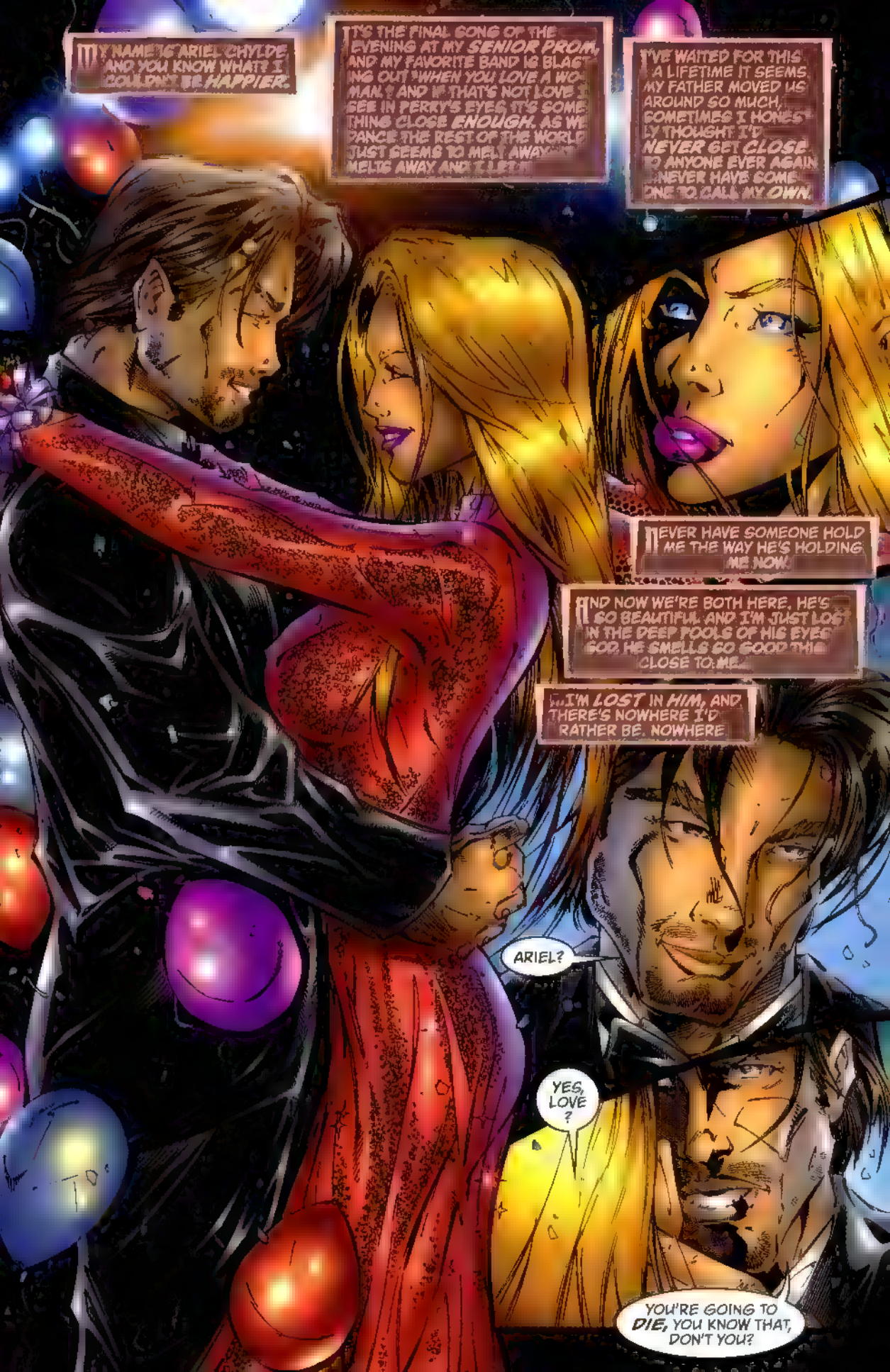
STORY SO FAR

Ariel had hoped that this time her move to Salem, GA would be different, but upon her arrival found herself in the painfully familiar place of being "the new girl" and having her shyness make it increasingly difficult to make friends and fit in. Plagued at night and even during class by familiar recurring nightmares, Ariel endured the present while hoping for a different future. Things started to look up when she encountered a young man her age named Perry Stodgmill. Clearly shaken and dared to hope. But that hope was destroyed when Ariel's father attacked her in her room that night. As much to Ariel's surprise as to her father's they both found out the hard way that Ariel has the ability to summon, and then become, any creature from her nightmares. In the hopes of aiding Ariel, Perry's father has hastened her away to a paid military research group known as Sentry, by whom he is employed. From the shadows, a third party, the mysterious Kauldron has set in motion a plan of his own, in which Ariel herself is an unwitting, yet integral part.

The nightmare realm awaits!

SPECIAL THANKS TO: The "King" and his court, Jim Lee, Beau Smith, Jimmy and Wendy, thanks for the cabkies, Ian Feler, Rob Samsel, Arnold Blumberg, Michael Renegades, the boys at Fan, the guys at American International, the folks at Wizard, Jeremy Heppner and Sean Parsons, and all those who stayed patiently.

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MY NAME'S ARIEL CHYLDE
AND YOU KNOW WHAT? I
COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.

IT'S THE FINAL GONG OF THE
EVENING AT MY SENIOR PROM,
AND MY FAVORITE BAND IS BLAST-
ING OUT "WHEN YOU LOVE A WO-
MAN." AND IF THAT'S NOT LOVE I
SEE IN PERRY'S EYES IT'S SOME-
THING CLOSE ENOUGH. AS WE
DANCE THE REST OF THE WORLD
JUST SEEMS TO MELT AWAY.
JUST SEEMS TO MELT AWAY AND I LET

I'VE WAITED FOR THIS.
A LIFETIME IT SEEMS.
MY FATHER MOVED US
AROUND SO MUCH,
SOMETIMES I HON-
ESTLY THOUGHT I'D
NEVER GET CLOSE
TO ANYONE EVER AGAIN.
I NEVER HAVE SOME-
ONE TO CALL MY OWN.

NEVER HAVE SOMEONE HOLD
ME THE WAY HE'S HOLDING
ME NOW.

AND NOW WE'RE BOTH HERE. HE'S
SO BEAUTIFUL AND I'M JUST LOST
IN THE DEEP POOLS OF HIS EYES.
GOD, HE SMELLS SO GOOD THIS
CLOSE TO ME.

I'M LOST IN HIM, AND
THERE'S NOWHERE I'D
RATHER BE. NOWHERE.

ARIEL?

YES,
LOVE
?

YOU'RE GOING TO
DIE, YOU KNOW THAT,
DON'T YOU?

COURSE I KNEW IT WOULDN'T LAST

WHA?!? ROBERT?! NO! THIS ISN'T REAL! GET AWAY FROM ME!!

Oh, believe me sweetie, it's REAL!!! And look at what you DID TO ME!!!!

But I think we BOTH KNOW how you can make it BETTER!

GET AWAY FROM ME!!! I HATE YOU!!!

PANIC SEIZES ME AND WRAPS ITS ICY FINGERS AROUND MY STOMACH AS I TURN TO RUN. AND ALL AROUND ME REALITY CONCEDES DEFEAT AS IT IS SWALLOWED WHOLE BY THE GROWING DARKNESS.

Come back, ARIEL!
Come give DADDY a KISS!!

LEAVE ME ALONE!!!

THE SHADOWS SEEM TO GRIPE AND LAUGH. THEY HAVE ME RIGHT WHERE THEY WANT ME, AND THEY KNOW THERE'S BE NO ESCAPE FOR ME. NOT THIS TIME.

BUT I RUN ANYWAY. FOOLISH ME. FOOLISH FOOLISH LITTLE ARIEL.

CHANGE INITIATED. APPROXIMATELY 13.7 SECONDS

SO I DESCEND FULL
THROTTLE INTO THE
HEART OF THIS BLACK
FOREST PRIMEVIL
SEEKING TO SHAKE THE
DEVIL AMONGST THE
TREES

HOPING THAT MAYBE IF I
RUN A LITTLE FASTER,
HOPE A LITTLE HARDER
SALVATION WILL SOMEHOW
EMBRACE ME

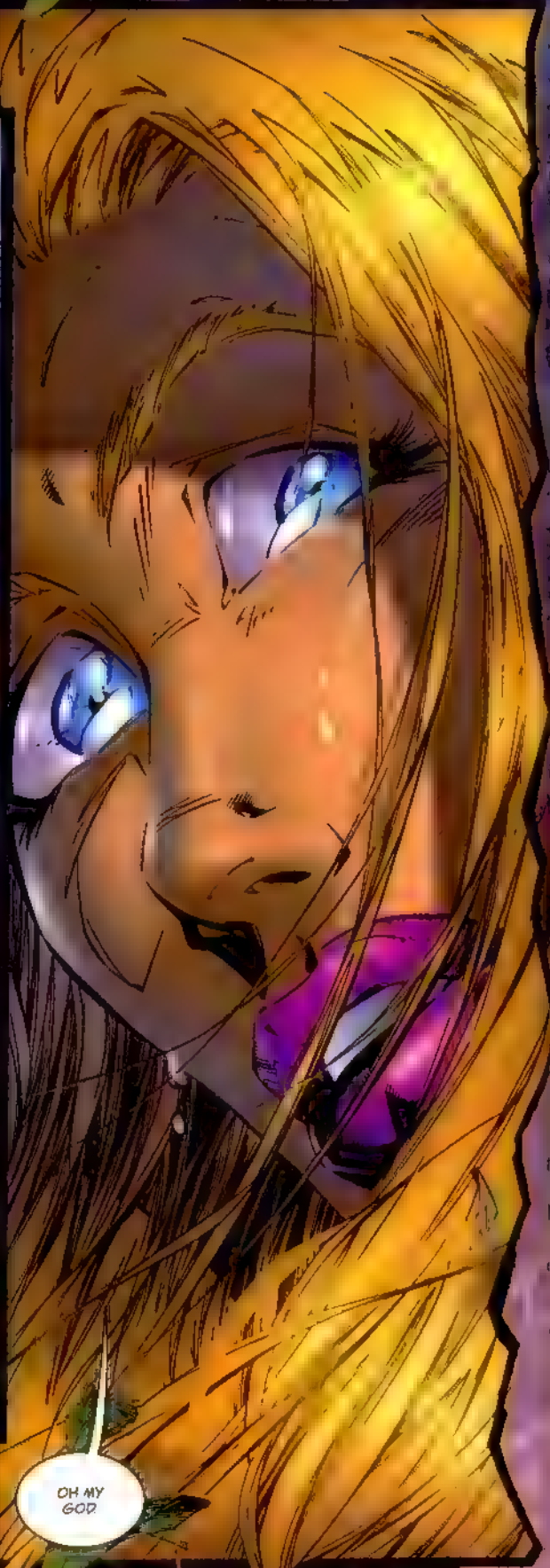
BUT SALVATION AND
HOPE LEFT HOURS
AGO...

I CAUGHT THE LAST TRAIN OUT
CAUGHT THE LAST TRAIN AND
LEFT POOR, FOOLISH LITTLE
ARIEL TO RUN BLINDLY SEEKING
TO EVADE THE HOWLING MAD-
NESS IN THE SHADOWS BEHIND
HER.

ONLY TO CONFRONT WHAT
EVER INSANITY WHICH
MIGHT LAY AHEAD

CHANGE INITIATED:
APPROXIMATELY
8.9 SECONDS...

AND INSANITY IS...



OH MY
GOD

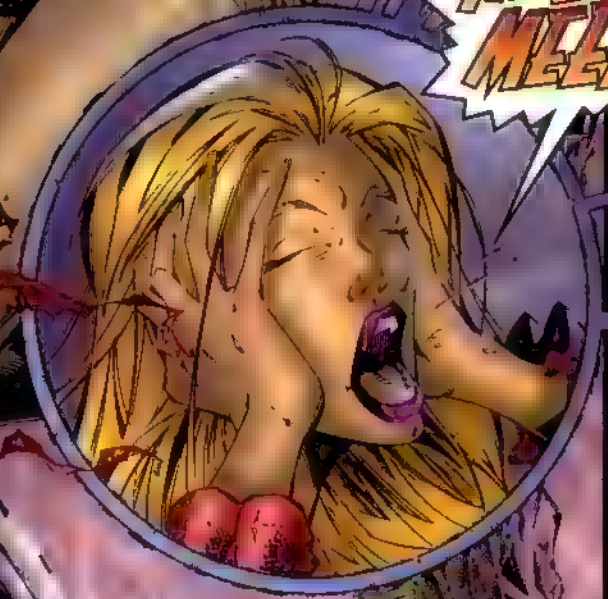
AND I REALIZE WITH FRIGHTEN-
ING CERTAINTY AS DESPAIR
SHOOFS OVER MY HEART LIKE
SOME BLACK FALCON



THAT WHEN YOU'RE RUN-
NING FROM YOURSELF

THERE CAN BE
NO ESCAPE
NOT EVER

HELP
MEEE



CHANGE INITIATED.
APPROXIMATELY
3.1 SECONDS...

CHANGE INITIATED.
APPROXIMATELY
3.1 SECONDS...

IT'S DRAWING, SCRATCHING,
BENEATH THE SURFACE, MAKING
ME TO FEEL PAIN.

CHANGE INITIATED.
APPROXIMATELY
2 SECONDS...1...

CHANGE INITIATED.
APPROXIMATELY
3.1 SECONDS...

CHANGE
INITIATED.

AAAIEEEEE!!!

CHANGE INITIATED.
APPROXIMATELY
3.1 SECONDS...

OUR
WORLD.

WHEN I FIRST SAW HER IN THE
PARKING LOT TWO DAYS AGO,
SHE GAVE ME A LOOK WITH EYES
I'LL NEVER FORGET. I DIDN'T
NEED CONVINCING THAT SHE WAS
SOMETHING SPECIAL. SOME-
THING DIFFERENT...

...I'VE GOTTA TELL YA,
SOMETIMES IT **SUCKS**
BEING RIGHT.

AND AS I WATCH THE SPECTACLE
BELOW ME AND HEAR HER HOWLS
FILL THE AIR, ANOTHER CERTAINTY
GNAWS AT MY GUT. THESE PEOPLE
AREN'T HELPING ARIEL...

THEY'RE
KILLING
HER.

RAAAOOOULLL!

YOU'RE
KILLING
HER!!!

ST
W

YEAH, YOU GUYS ARE A **BIG HELP!!!** THIS HAS GOTTA STOP, AND IT'S GOTTA STOP **NOW!!!** FORCING HER TO TURN INTO THOSE THINGS IS WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM!!! **MAKE IT STOP!!!**

IT WOULD SEEM A HOT TEMPERAMENT RUNS IN THE FAMILY, DOESN'T IT, JACK?

YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO **HELP** HER, AND YOU'RE NOT **HELPING ANYBODY, GODDAMMIT!!!**

DEAR BOY, IN **ORDER** FOR US TO PREVENT MS. CHYLDE FROM METAMORPHING AGAIN, WE MUST FIRST DETERMINE AND ISOLATE WHAT **EXACTLY** INITIATES IT.

BY INJECTING VARIOUS **CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS** AND **ENZYME COMBINATIONS** INTO HER SYSTEM WE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN "**SUCCESSFUL**" AT TRIGGERING THE DESIRED **RESPONSE**. NOW, YOUNG MAN, HAVING DONE THAT, WE CAN PROCEED TO THE NEXT STEP

ENOUGH ALREADY, ULLMAN! JESUS! CAN'T YOU HEAR THAT??!

RAAAOOOOOULLL!!

YES. JUST A KID. YOUR AVERAGE, EVERYDAY KID, WHO JUST HAPPENS TO HAVE THE UNCANNY ABILITY TO TURN INTO ANY CREATURE FROM HER **NIGHTMARES!!** JUST AN INCREDIBLY **DANGEROUS** AND **DEADLY "KID"** WHO KILLED HER FATHER, AND THEN DESTROYED BOTH YOUR HOUSES!!

SHE'S JUST A KID, DAMMIT!!

I'D SAY THIS IS A LITTLE MORE **SEVERE** THAN YOUR EVERYDAY CASE OF THE FLU, ISN'T IT **JACK??** WE CAN'T EXACTLY JUST GIVE HER A PILL, PAT HER ON THE HEAD AND SEND HER ON HER WAY, NOW CAN WE??

YEAH, I THINK SO. I THINK I'VE GOT IT FIGURED OUT NOW...

WHAK!!

FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN ULLMAN, YOU'RE NOT **HELPING** HER, YOU'RE **HURTING** HER!

IT'S HELPING **US** TO **HELP** HER, JACK. BY SUCCESSFULLY DETERMINING THE **CHEMICAL CATALYST** FOR HER METAMORPHOSIS WE **MIGHT** HAVE A CHANCE AT SAVING THIS GIRL, BUT **NOT** WITH YOU AND YOUR ZEALOUS SON IN MY FACE IMPEDING OUR PROGRESS AT **EVERY STEP!!** UNDERSTAND??!

IT PROBABLY WASN'T THE SMARTEST THING
TO DO, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

ESPECIALLY SINCE HE IS MY SUPERIOR AND
WE'RE SURROUNDED BY ENOUGH ARMED
SENTRY GUARDS TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT...

...GUARDS WHO DON'T WASTE ANY TIME
MAKING THEIR APPRAISAL OF THE
SITUATION.



JACK, I ALWAYS KNEW YOU
WERE DUMB, BUT YOU'VE JUST DIS-
COVERED NEW HEIGHTS OF IDIOCY
CONGRATULATIONS. MEN, IF YOU WOULD
PLEASE, ESCORT THE HOT-HEADED
STODGHILLS TO A QUIET HOLDING ROOM
WHERE THEY CAN BOTH SIMMER
DOWN AND CONSIDER COOPERA-
TING

YES
S.R.

WE'LL GET
TOGETHER SOON,
JACK.

AS WE'RE BOTH DRAGGED AWAY, I CAN
STILL HEAR ARIEL'S TORTURED SCREAMS...

...SCREAMS STOLEN
FROM THE HEART OF
HER VERY SOUL.

A SOUL IT WOULD
SEEM WE'VE HANDED
OVER TO THE DEVIL

AND IF THOSE MONSTERS THEY'RE FORCING
HER TO BECOME CAN FIND THEIR WAY BACK
ONCE SHE'S REGAINED HER FORM, FIND
THEIR WAY BACK LIKE THE ONE THAT ATTACKED
US THE OTHER NIGHT... THEN WE'RE ALL IN
A WORLD OF TROUBLE...

... WITH NO HELP IN SIGHT.

OUTSIDE THE
COMPOUND...

WHAT NOW,
GENIUS??

NOW WE
PENETRATE
THIS ARMED
SENTRY
OUTPOST.

AND WHY
EXACTLY
WOULD WE
WANT TO DO
THAT??

ARIEL HAS BEEN TAKEN
HERE BY THOSE SEEKING
TO HELP HER. SHE HAS BEEN
PLACED, INADVERTANTLY,
IN EVEN GREATER DANGER

WE MUST
PROCEED WITH
CAUTION...

INADVERTANTLY
PLACED IN DANGER,
Huh?? Oh, you mean
kind of like what
YOU'VE DONE WITH
WAR AND PIECE??
I GET IT.

AND I SUPPOSE
ALL YOUR GOOD
FRIENDS AT THE
PSYCHIC NETWORK
KEEP YOU POSTED
OF ALL THIS??

I JUST
KNOW
THINGS.

THEN IT SHOULD COME
AS NO SURPRISE THAT YOU'RE
GETTING ON MY LAST NERVE

KARUNK!

Damn, WAR,
DON'T YOU THINK
THAT WAS A LITTLE
EXCESSIVE, BUDDY??

HEY WAR, AND
COULD HAVE SIMPLY
RENDERED HIM
UNCONSCIOUS.

OOPS, WAR
KNOW BETTER
NEXT TIME.

CAN'T TAKE YOU
ANYWHERE! SO WHAT'S
THE BATTLE PLAN,
FEATHERS??

IT'S
SAGE.

WHAT
EVER.

WE MAKE AS
LITTLE NOISE AS
POSSIBLE, KILL
AS FEW PEOPLE AS
POSSIBLE, AND
GET HER OUT
OF THERE.

I LIKE IT.

A HILLSIDE OVERLOOK NEARBY, A SHADOWED FIGURE WAITS. PATIENTLY, AS HE HAS FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, AND YET HE GROWS INCREASINGLY RESTLESS. FOR HIS PRIZE, IT WOULD SEEM, HAS BEEN HASTENED OUT OF HIS REACH, OUT OF HIS "INFLUENCE," AND THAT IS SOMETHING KAULDRON PLANS TO REMEDY...

...AND REMEDY SOON.

I HOPE YOU
HAVE NEWS FOR ME,
PENNANCE...

OR
WHAT
?!?

LET ME GUESS!
YOU'RE GOING TO RIP
A GIANT HOLE IN MY
CHEST... OH! TOO
LATE!!!

PERHAPS IF I STROKED
HIS FRAGILE EGO, I COULD
CONVINCE HAIRBALL TO SMASH
IN YOUR SKULL AND SPARE US
BOTH YOUR TIRE SOME BANALITY.
BUT THEN YOU'D NO LONGER
BE A VERY USEFUL PUP,
WOULD YOU?

NOW, WHERE
HAVE THEY TAKEN
OUR GIRL?

IF YOU MEAN
THAT LITTLE BITCH
ARIEL...

... THEY'VE TAKEN HER TO SOME SORT
OF STRONGHOLD. MILITARY LOOKING GUARDS.
PRETTY HIGH-TECH. AND JUST A LITTLE FOOT-
NOTE, SPOOKYBOY, IF YOU CALL ME A PUP
AGAIN, I SWEAR TO CHRIST I'LL--

YES YES,
DO SOMETHING
REALLY HORRIBLE
TO ME, I'M SURE

AND YOU KNOW THAT AS LONG AS YOU ARE HERE, YOU ARE FOREVER BOUND TO ME, YOU AND HAIRBALL BOTH, SO PLEASE FEEL FREE TO GET USED TO IT, AND ENOUGH ALREADY WITH YOUR EMPTY THREATS!! THEY REALLY ARE STARTING TO WEAR THIN.

NOTHING QUITE WORSE THAN A BARKING "PUP" WITH NO TEETH. DO WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING?!!?

SURE.
WHAT NOW,
MASTER?

HRRRRRRR...

"WHAT NOW," IDIOT, IS I WILL DISPATCH YOURSELF AND YOUR QUIET FRIEND OVER THERE TO "FETCH" OUR ARIEL, FINISH WHAT WE STARTED WE HAVE MUCH WORK AHEAD OF US THIS EVENING.

HOW FORTIFIED IS THIS PLACE? HOW TOUGH WILL IT BE TO BREACH?

ABOUT AS TOUGH AS IT WILL BE FOR YOU TO KEEP FROM SCREAMING WHEN I FINALLY GET MY HANDS ON YOU, KAULDRON.



I LIKED THAT
ONE YOU'RE GOOD
... I'LL HAND IT TO
YOU. YOU'RE
GOOD...

GOOD ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE A VERY LARGE GATEWAY FROM THE NIGHTMARE REALM OPENING UP BEHIND YOU...

NEXT YOU'LL BE TELLING ME MY SHOES...

...UNTIED.

KAULDRON'S SINGULAR PURPOSE WAS TO USE AR EL'S SUMMONING POWER TO "REEL IN" THE OTHERWORLDLY CREATURES OF MAN'S NIGHTMARE, IN A BID TO USE A WORLD THAT REJECTED HIM AGAINST A WORLD THAT DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER...

IT WOULD APPEAR, THEN, THAT SOMEONE HAS JUST HELPED HIM OUT IN A VERY LARGE WAY...

SOMEONE INCREDIBLY BOLD. CLEVER... CUNNING...

WE'RE THROUGH!!! WE'RE THROUGH!!! WE'RE THROUGH!!! WE'RE...

SOMEONE INCREDIBLY... STUPID.

HELLO FLATULENCE SO GOOD OF YOU TO DROP IN, BUT YOU REALLY SHOULD CALL FIRST!!

WE'RE SCREWED, ALL RIGHT?!!

NEXT YOU'LL
BE TELLING ME
MY SHOES...

UNITED

KAULDRON'S SINGULAR PURPOSE WAS TO USE AR EL'S SUMMONING POWER TO "REEL IN" THE OTHERWORLDLY CREATURES OF MAN'S NIGHTMARE, IN A BID TO USE A WORLD THAT REJECTED HIM AGAINST A WORLD THAT DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER...

IT WOULD APPEAR, THEN, THAT SOMEONE HAS JUST HELPED HIM OUT IN A VERY LARGE WAY...

SOMEONE INCREDIBLY
BOLD CLEVER,,,CUNNING,,,

WE'RE
THROUGH!!!
WE'RE THROUGH!!!
WE'RE THROUGH!!!
WE'RE...

SOMEONE
INCREDIBLY...
STUPID.

HELLO
FLATULENCE SO
GOOD OF YOU TO
DROP IN, BUT YOU
REALLY SHOULD
CALL FIRST!!

WE'RE
SCREWED, ALL
RIGHT?!

SENTRY
COMPOUND,
ARIEL'S
HOLDING
CELL:

WHERE, ALONE AND EXHAUSTED,
BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY,
A CERTAIN SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD
GIRL CURLS HERSELF INTO A BALL
AND SOBS QUIETLY...

...THOUGH NEVER
OUT OF THE REACH
OF PRYING EYES.

SHE SHOULD, IN FACT, BE
ANYWHERE **BUT** HERE.
YOUNG, VIGOROUS, AND
WITH A SMILE, THOUGH
NOT SEEN OFTEN ENOUGH,
WHICH COULD BRIGHTEN
ANY ROOM, AND WITH A
BEAUTY...

...A BEAUTY PAINTED TOO
OFTEN IN SHADES OF
DESPAIR. HAPPINESS,
SADLY, TO ARIEL IS A GOAL
LONG STRIVED FOR AND
ALMOST NEVER ACHIEVED.

AND NOW SHE WANTS THAT WITH ALL HER
SOUL THAT THING MOST UNFAMILIAR
WANTS IT MORE THAN ANYTHING. HAPPINESS.
PEACE. THOSE EVER-ELUSIVE OLD FRIENDS
THAT SHE WISHES WOULD PAY HER A VISIT...

...YET THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE
ARIEL LONGS FOR, SOMETHING
EQUALLY AS UNFAMILIAR...EQUALLY
AS ALIEN...AND EQUALLY AS MISSED...

MOTHER, WHY IS IT NOW
THAT I THINK OF YOU

I WAS SO YOUNG WHEN YOU
LEFT. YOU WERE SO KIND,
SO GENTLE. I ALWAYS FELT
SO SAFE WITH YOU. I RE-
MEMBER LOOKING UP AT YOU
JUST LOST IN THE AMBER
GLOW OF YOUR EYES AS YOU
CRADLED ME. I WISH YOU
WERE HERE WITH ME NOW.

...I WISH...I WISH I COULD FEEL THE
GENTLE THRUM OF YOUR HEART AS YOU
HELD ME TO YOUR WARM BREAST, AS I
LISTENED TO STORIES OF DARK FORESTS
AND HOUSES MADE OF SINGERS' BLOOD.

I TRY TO RECALL YOUR FACE,
BUT NO IMAGES COME, ONLY
FEELINGS. FEELINGS OF LOVE
AND JOY, THOUGH HAUNTED BY
A LINGERING SADNESS. I'M IN
ONE OF THOSE DARK
FORESTS NOW, MOTHER. I
NEVER FELT MORE VIOLATED,
MORE ANGRY, MORE CONFUSED,
MORE DEFEATED.

AND I WISH YOU WERE HERE
TO SAVE ME, MOM. MOMMY!
I MISS YOU.

GOD, I MISS YOU
SO MUCH.



ARIEL...

HUHHHH???

ARIEL, DON'T BE
FRIGHTENED. I'M HERE
TO HELP YOU... I'M HERE
TO HELP...

WHAT'RE YOU...?!
SOMETHING IS ...
FAMILIAR ABOUT
YOU...!

yes.

YOU'RE THAT...
THING... IN MY
DREAMS!! ALWAYS
CLOSE BY...
ALWAYS...

...WATCHING
OVER ME.

yes.



KASMAAHHH!

Oh yeah,
they're with
me.



YEAH, WE'RE THE MUSCLE. GOOD TO MEET YA GIRLY, HEARD AN AWFUL LOT ABOUT YA, LOVE TO STAY AND CHAT BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE REALLY FAST LIKE, Y'KNOW WHAT I MEAN??

OH, YOU MEAN "PRESIDENT TEMPER" AND HIS SON, HERE? LUCKY FOR YOU, HOTPANTS, WE'RE ALWAYS ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE GAME... SHOULD'VE SEEN US TRYING TO CONVINCE THEM WE WERE THE GOOD GUYS!

HEY, ARIEL

I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE WHY, BUT I'M NOT FRIGHTENED BY THEM AT ALL. AND THE FIRST WORDS OUT OF MY MOUTH AREN'T EVEN REGARDING MY IMMEDIATE SAFETY...

WE'VE GOTTA FIND PERRY AND JACK!

PERRY!

WE'VE GOTTA GO...

SECURITY BREACH!



ARE YOU OKAY?
I WAS AFRAID
THEY...

I'M
BETTER
NOW.

HERE'S YOUR
"SECURITY
BREACH"
BUDDY!

SIR, IT
WOULD
APPEAR
WE HAVE A
PROBLEM

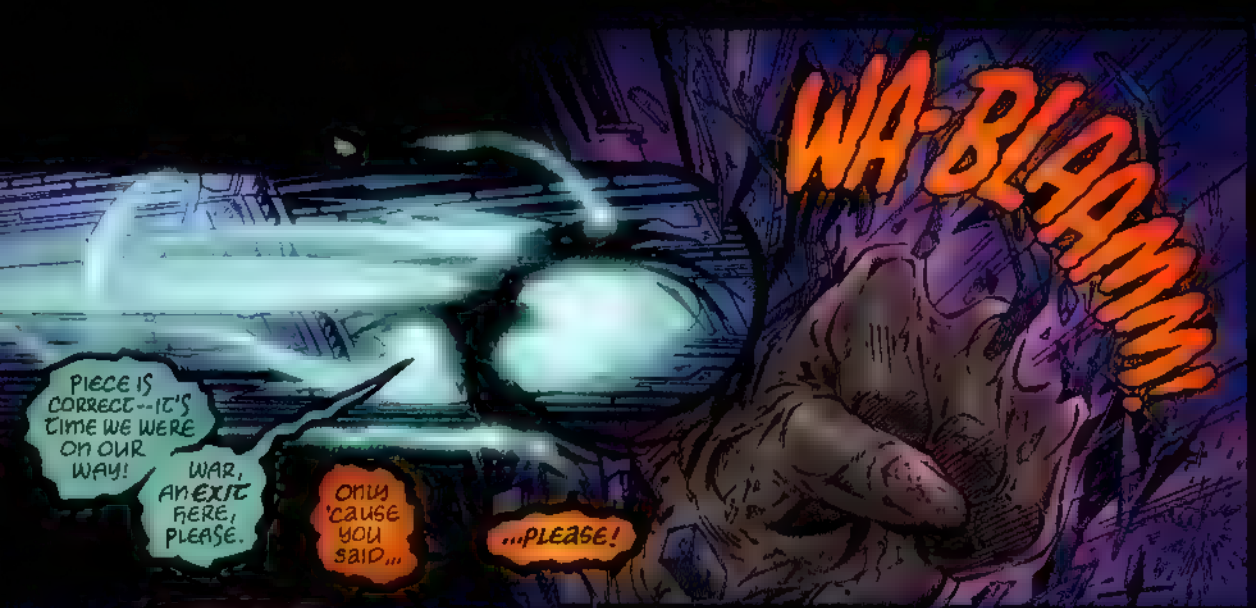
YOU GUYS
CAN DO THIS
LATER!!

WE'VE
GOTTA GO--
GOTTA
GO!!

IT WOULD APPEAR.
I WANT BLOCKADES AT
EACH BOTTLENECK AND
AN ARMED GARRISON OF
AIRVIPERS AND INFANTRY
WAITING OUTSIDE IN CASE
THEY BREAK OUT OF
THE PERIMETER

YES,
SIR.

THEY
AREN'T GOING
ANYWHERE.



WA-BLAMMM!

PIECE IS
CORRECT--IT'S
TIME WE WERE
ON OUR
WAY!

WAR,
AN EXIT
HERE,
PLEASE.

ONLY
'CAUSE
YOU
SAID...

...PLEASE!

LET'S MOVE IT!
INTO THE WOODS! QUICKLY!
IT'LL BE HARDER FOR THEM
TO FOLLOW!

THEY'RE GONNA
BE ALL OVER US IN
ABOUT TWO SECONDS!

TOO
LATE!!



ZARRKK!

KBWHAM!

WHEN TR'
FELL DID YOU
GET EYE-
BEAMS?!

NO...
NOT TOO
LATE.

JUST
NOW.

WHATEVER
WORKS...

THE BIG GUY BOUGHT US
SOME TIME.. I CAN SEE
THE EDGE OF THE FOREST
LESS THAN 100 YARDS
AWAY...IF WE CAN MAKE IT
WE STAND A CHANCE. IF
WE CAN MAKE IT INTO THE
HEART OF THOSE DARK
WOODS WE MIGHT BE
ABLE TO GET AWAY...

STOP
WHERE YOU
ARE!!!

WE'RE ALMOST THERE...
(WE'RE NOT GOING TO
MAKE IT)

WE'RE GOING TO DO IT
...NO YOU'RE NOT

JUST LIKE ON THE
FIELD, DEEP IN
ENEMY TERRITORY...
ALMOST TO THE
GOAL LINE..

...ALMOST...
(YOU'RE GOING
CLOSE)

SCHRIIPPT!
SCHRIIPPT!

SCHRAANK!

...SCRATCH THE
FENCE.

THERE!!!

PHWAAM!

AAARRGGHH!!
DAMN IT!

DAD!!!

JUST
GO!! DON'T
STOP!!

OH
MY GOD,
JACK!!

DAD, YOU
GOTTA GET
UP!!

TARGETS
LOCKED...

move...

KABWAAAMM!

NOBODY
GETS LEFT
BEHIND...

WE MADE IT TOUCHDOWN. INTO THE
FOREST. RACING FOR OUR
LIVES WITH THE HOWLS OF HELL
BARKING BEHIND US

AS WE DESCEND INTO THE DARKNESS,
AS WE RACE FULL THROTTLE INTO THE
COMFORT OF THE SHADOWS, FOR THE
FIRST TIME I BELIEVE WE'RE GOING
TO MAKE IT...

...FOR THE FIRST TIME
HOPE WELLS UP IN
MY HEART...

IT DOESN'T
LAST.

OH MY
GOD...

HELLO,
ARIEL...





WARRIOR

Image Comics and Majesty Graphics
presents

Part 5

"Departure"

Randy Queen

ulcers, turtle-paced primadonna
(creator, writer, penciler)

Jason Gorder

traces hell
(inks)

Jimmy Yu

always manages to pull through
(colors)

Steve Dutro

always knows just what to do
(letters)

Brett Evans

can never be reached by phone
(design)

DEDICATED TO THE FANS

This one's for you!
Thanks for waiting...

RQ

Julia Simmons

Melanie Simmons

never too busy to get occasional
allay annoyed
(whip cracks)

Ronna Vladic

has a super sexy voice
(production assist)

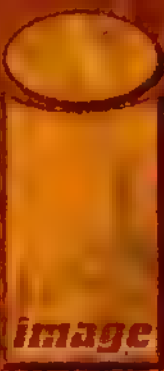
Jenna Sosebee

eye candy
(production assistant to
Mr. Queen)

for image comics

Larry Marder

will soon have an animal
for his
(executive director)



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KEU
1997
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I WOKE UP TO THIS
NIGHTMARE AND
WAS IN LIFE

AND DO ME A
FAVOR
DON'T GO

DON'T EVER RUN THE
THE DANGER OF
SAYING THINGS
SOUNDING POSSIBLE
GETTING HORRIBLE

BECAUSE
GUESS
WHAT?



SISTER PATE WILL
MAKE SURE THAT
THEY DO, JUST
TO SPITE YOU.

SEE, I MADE THAT MISTAKE, AND
SISTER PATE AND I ARE OLD
FRIENDS. I'VE GOTTEN PAINFULLY
FAMILIAR WITH HOW THAT BITCH'S
MIND WORKS. I'M BORN TO SAY

THEN SHE'LL DESTROY THEM,
JUST LIKE SHE'S DESTROYED
MY LIFE. HER AND THAT
MAN SITTING IN SHADOW
IN THE GRAVEYARD.

RIGHT NOW, AS I HURDLE
THROUGH THIS FOREST
OF PERPETUAL MIDNIGHT,
RIGHT THIS VERY SECOND,
AS I HOPE IN VAIN TO
ELUDE THE UNLEASHED
FURY OF MAN'S NIGHT-
MARE, SISTER PATE
LAUGHING HER BORD-
ERS OFF.

THIS IS ENTERTAINMENT
FOR HER, AND RIGHT
NOW I'M HER FAVORITE
FLAVOR.

AND AFTER SHE RIPPED APART BY THE ROARING
MONSTROUS BEHIND ME. AFTER MY
CORPSE IS COOL AND THE STAIN NO LONGER
RINGS FROM MY CARGASS, SHE'LL MOVE ON
TO MY FRIENDS WHO'RE NOTHING SHE HAS TO
MAKE THEIR BETTERWORLD SAME AS ME.

THAT MAN I
SAW AT MY
SCHOOL.

THEY ARE THE ONES
RESPONSIBLE FOR
UNLEASHING THIS
MADNESS HERE
IN GALEN.

THEY BROUGHT THE NIGHT-
MARES TO MY WORLD AND
MADE THEM ALL REAL.

THEY ARE
THE ONES
TO BLAME.

NOT ME.

NOT ME!

MY NAME IS PERRY STODGNILL
AND I COULDN'T RUN ANY
FASTER IF MY LIFE DEPENDED
ON IT.

PROBLEM IS, MY
LIFE **DOES**
DEPEND ON IT...

WE'RE ALL FUGITIVES RUNNING MAD
INTO THE SHADOWS WITH THE HOUNDS
OF HELL ITSELF BARKING AT OUR BACKS...

THE PRIZE TONIGHT ISN'T A
FIELD GOAL OR A CONGRAT-
ULATORY KISS FROM 'MOST
PHOTOGENIC'

AND THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE
ISN'T A 'HEADS HUNG LOW
TONGUE LASHING FROM THE
COACH", EITHER.

I'M PUSHING MYSELF AS HARD
AS A GUY RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE
COULD POSSIBLY PUSH HIMSELF,
BUT I CAN'T MAKE THESE LEGS
GO AS FAST AS THEY NEED TO
BE GOING...

THIS IS THE BIG GAME
AND WE'RE LOSING.

MY CHEST IS A
HEAVING FURNACE...

...MY ABS HAVE A
KNIFE STUCK IN THEM...

...THERE'S A ROCK
IN MY SHOE...

WE'RE GOING
TO DIE.

TONIGHT.

IN THIS
FOREST.

OVER
THERE! GET
US TO THAT
STORM DRAIN...IT
LEADS UNDER
THE TOWN...GET
US OUT OF THE
OPEN...

YOU
HEAR THAT
JOCKBOY?

PERRY.
YOU CALL
HIM PERRY.
HIS NAME IS
PERRY.

WHATEVER

POPS SAYS
THIS WAY,
PERRY!

AND
FATHER KNOWS
BEST! NOT THAT
WE'RE NOT ALL
GOING TO DIE
ANYWAY...





I CAN'T HEAR THEM BEHIND ME ANYMORE, BUT I KNOW THEY'RE THERE... WAITING FOR ME TO STOP RUNNING AND TURN AROUND SO THEY CAN GORBLE ME UP. THAT WOULD BE THE EASY THING TO DO...

JUST GIVE UP. ADMIT DEFEAT. CURL UP IN A LITTLE BALL AND LET MYSELF GET EATEN ALIVE. IT WOULD BE OVER QUICK. I'D FINALLY BE AT PEACE.

BUT THAT'S WHAT SISTER FATE WANTS ME TO DO AND I'D BE WRAPPING UP HER LITTLE FAIRY ALL NICE AND HEAT, AND SHE'D BE HAPPY. ARIEL DIES. END OF STORY.

BUT CHECK THIS OUT... I'M GOING TO DO THE EXACT OPPOSITE. I'M GOING TO DO THE EXACT OPPOSITE TO SHOW SISTER FATE THAT MAYBE SHE DOESN'T HAVE ALL THE CARDS. I'M GONNA DO IT JUST TO GET IN HER FACE.

I'M GOING TO LIVE...

I'M GOING TO HAVE MY REVENGE...

I EARNED IT, PAID FOR IT WITH MY GODDAMN SOUL AND I FIGURE I SHOULD AT LEAST HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW FOR IT.

I'M GOING TO THROW CONVENTIONAL WISDOM RIGHT OUT THE WINDOW AND TURN AND FIGHT.

IF I TRULY DO HAVE THE ABILITY TO BECOME ANY CREATURE FROM MAN'S NIGHTMARE, I'D SAY THAT'S ONE HELL OF A WEAPON. NO RUN INTENDED.

ALL MY LIFE HAS BEEN RUN, RUN, RUN, AWAY FROM MY FRIENDS, MY SCHOOLS, MY DESIRES, MY DREAMS. ALWAYS GOTTA GO. I'M SICK OF IT. I WON'T RUN EVER AGAIN. IT STOPS HERE. RIGHT THIS SECOND. JUST WATCH.

FACE ME, YOU UNHOLY BASTARDS!

CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW GREAT IT WOULD'VE BEEN, HAD THERE ACTUALLY BEEN SOMETHING THERE?

HOW PERFECT. I FINALLY SUMMON THE COURAGE, AND I CAN'T EVEN GET AN AUDIENCE...

BRAYO,
MY DEAR BRIEL!
BRAYO! I
KNEW YOU
HAD GUTS...

...IN FACT,
I CAN'T WAIT
TO SEE
THEM!

I WANT
WHAT I'VE
ALWAYS WANTED,
MY SWEET GRL...
I WANT YOU TO
BLEED!

I WANT
YOU TO
SUFFER!

I WANT
YOU TO GET
MAD!

I WANT
YOU TO DEFEND
YOURSELF AND
BRING MORE
OF THEM HERE!

O'MON,
LITTLE GIRL...
GET PISSED AND
SHOW KAUUDRON
YOUR TRUE
COLORS!

I'VE
WAITED
17 YEARS
FOR
TOMORROW!

CHANGE
FOR ME!

IS
THAT WHAT
YOU
WANT?
OKAY..

OKAY,
IF THAT'S
WHAT YOU
WANT, I'M
GOING TO
GIVE IT
TO YOU..

WHO
ARE YOU?
WHY ARE
YOU DOING
THIS?

WHAT
DO YOU
WANT
FROM ME?

WHACK!

SCHLICK!

SMACK!

I'M GONNA
GIVE YOU MORE
THAN YOU CAN
HANDLE!



ALL THE TIMES BEFORE THE CHANGE HAS BEEN REACTIONARY. IT'S SOMETHING QUITE CLOSE TO HELL, HAVING YOUR BONES TWIST, SNAP AND CHANGE SHAPE. HAVING YOUR SKIN STRETCH UNTIL IT FEELS LIKE IT'S GOING TO RIP RIGHT AS YOUR BLOOD REACHES ITS BOILING POINT.

IN MANY WAYS IT ISN'T LIKE DYING AND BEING BORN AGAIN. IT IS DYING AND BEING BORN AGAIN.

BEING BORN INTO THE BODY OF A NIGHTMARE WARE WARRIOR.

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, I WILL THE CHANGE ONTO MYSELF AND REACH DEEP DOWN INTO THE SHADY REMNANT OF MY SOUL WHERE THE DRAGON DWELLS.

SCRIPT

SCRIPT

FANG, HE CALLS HIMSELF. HE'S ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST FEARED BEASTS OF MY NIGHTMARES, AND THE DARKNESS WITHIN HIM IS SO GREAT AND SO FAST I COULD EASILY LOSE MYSELF IN IT. BUT AT THIS POINT I DON'T EVEN CARE ANYMORE. THERE'S NOT MUCH LEFT OF ME ANYWAY. NOT MUCH LEFT FOR I SURRENDER TO THE BEAST INSIDE. THE BEAST WHO IS, EVEN NOW, SWIMMING UP FROM THE DARK DEPTHS OF MY MIND.

DRAY, DRAGON YOU SAID YOU'D SAVED ME ONCE BEFORE. AND THAT YOU'D DO IT AGAIN. I WILL. I'M GONNA HOLD YOU TO IT.

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANTED TO SEE, KAILDRON? JUST WAIT...

*SEE ISSUE #3 FOR AREL'S TALK WITH FANG.



IT GETS WORSE!

P4
CRASH
BRIOT

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

THAT SOUNDED REALLY BIG. I HAVE A BAD FEELING OUR SITUATION JUST GOT WORSE...

IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?

BRIOT

WRAKPT

FEAR, IT SEEMS, HAS ALWAYS BEEN SOMETHING OF A STRANGER TO OUR FRIEND KAHLDRON. BUT IF HE CAN LOOK SPREADING ACROSS HIS FACE IS AN INDICATION. LOOKS AS THOUGH THE TWO OF THEM ARE NOT ACQUAINTED.

AND IF DRAGONS COULD SMILE, THEY WOULD.

WHO'S TERRIFIED **NOW,** FLESHLING?

ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU'RE NOT SO SMUG ANYMORE, ARE YOU, KAHLDRON?

ARE YOU?

IF MY ENEMY WERE A LITTLE LESS FRIGHTENED AND WERE ABLE TO LOOK BEHIND HIM AND A LITTLE TO THE LEFT.

HE MIGHT NOTICE SOMEONE ELSE TONIGHT HAS THEIR SIGHTS SET ON REVENGE.



AS IT STANDS, THOUGH, HE'S TOO BUSY SUMMONING A LITTLE COUSIN OF HIS OWN...

AND YOU BLACKHEARTED IDIOT! DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM? DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT I AM... WHAT IT IS I HAVE AROUND MY NECK??
AND AS LONG AS I OWN IT...
...I OWN YOU!



NOW YOUR GOLD-BLOODED SOUL AND THE RING OF SOLOMON ARE BOTH IN MY POSSESSION!



AND JUST LIKE A STUCK UP LITTLE WADDER WITHOUT DADDY'S CREDIT CARD...

Remembrance!

YOU'RE A LITTLE LESS THAN NOTHING WITHOUT IT!

AND IT WAS A DANGEROUS LITTLE PIECE OF METAL. UNFORTUNATELY FOR KIDLDRON, THOUGH, ALL IT TAKES IS A MOMENT WHEN HIS FOCUS IS DISTRACTED FOR IT NOT TO WORK...

AND UNFORTUNATELY FOR ME KIDLDRON HAS MADE MORE THAN ONE ENEMY IN HIS TIME... AN ENEMY THAT PATIENTLY WAITED FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT HIMSELF...

AN OPPORTUNITY I JUST PROVIDED.



I TOLD YOU I'D GET YOU, KIDLDRON!
...NOW IT'S LONG OVERTIME PAYBACK TIME!



SLASH

MOOO!

IF YOU WANTIN' FOR A BETTER CHANCE GIRLY, IT AIN'T COMIN'!



ARIEL, DON'T!



THAT'S FUNNY.
THAT'S JUST WHAT MY FATHER SAID...



HE WASN'T YOUR FA-

FWOOH

I WATCH THEM BOTH DISOLVE INTO
PUZZLES OF MAGMA AND THEIR
SOUTHSIDE BOILING INSIDE

THEIR NAMES COMING THEY
BOTH LAUGHING

FOR A SECOND AND ONLY A
SECOND, SOMETHING KAHLDRON
SAID GRIMING AT ME

HE WASN'T
YOUR FATHER.

FOOL JUST TRYING TO THROW ME OFF
BALANCE, MAKE ME QUESTION MY
MOTIVES. BUT AS THE THUNDERING
HEART OF THE BEAST WITHIN ME QUICKENS

AS I FEEL THE SURGE OF MOLTEN
BLOOD GOASING THROUGH ME
LIKE THE SOUND OF SOME GREAT
RIVER IN MY BARDRUMS, THERE
WILL BE NO QUESTIONING OF ANYTHING.

I AM NO LONGER ARIEL. I AM FANG.
I AM POWER. AND YOU, KAHLDRON,
WHAT THERE IS LEFT.

YOU ARE FOOD FOR THE
GARRION CROWS, AND
YOU DESERVE NO
BETTER.

I FLAP POWERFUL WINGS AND IN A GUST
OF ACRID AIR, I TAKE FLIGHT.

TONIGHT JUSTICE WEARS THE
GUISE OF A BLACK-WINGED
DEVIL SWIMMING THROUGH
THE CANOPY OF VELVET THE
SMELL OF BLOOD STAINING
THE SKY.

AND THAT EVIL, WILL GROW
STRANGER, TWICE NOW I
HAVE KILLED, AND IF REMORSE
IS TO BE INTRODUCED TO ME
WE ARE AS OF YET STRANGERS.

THEY BROUGHT THIS HELL DOWN ON
THEMSELVES. ALL OF THEM. I HAVE
FRIENDS TO SAVE AND ENEMIES TO
KILL, AND NOTHING WILL STOP ME.



THEY ARE
THOMAS

RECKLESS AND STUPID,
INTOXICATED WITH HOPES
OF VICTORY. THEY
ARE HEADLONG INTO
THE Maelstrom OF
DESTRUCTION.

LITTLE
FOOLS.

SEE HOW
THEY BURN.

SEE HOW THEY ALL BURN,
DARTING INTO THE SHADOWS
OF THE FOREST HOPING TO
FIND SOLACE, SEEKING TO
EVADE MY FLAMES. SOLACE
ISN'T IN THE FOREST, LITTLE
FOOLS... I ALREADY LOOKED.

BUT I WILL FIND YOU. I
WILL FIND YOU AND
THEN YOU WILL ALL DIE.



MY BOYS! MY BOYS!

DRUNK ON HER OWN POWER, ARIEL LASHES OUT A WOUNDED AND DANGEROUS ANIMAL BOTH CRAZED AND LOST IN HER OWN RAGE SHE MUST DESTROY THOSE WHO'S HURT HER... RUINED HER LIFE...

PERRY, GET DOWN!

SHE MUST PURGE THEM ALL WITH HER ANGER, A SYMBOLIC CLEANSING A WASHING AWAY OF SHATTERED YESTERDAYS WITH HER BAPTISM OF FIRE... YES, HELD PRISONER AND BLINDED BY HER OWN FURY SHE PLACES THOSE FEET SHE SOUGHT TO PROTECT IN EVEN FURTHER JEOPARDY...

SHE'S TOASTING MY BOYS!

FLATULENCE MUST FLEE!

WAIT, MY FATHER..



DAD!



IRRETRIEVABLE JEOPARDY



BETTER HIM THAN ME..

THE HATED ALL THIS RAGE THAT'S RISING THROUGH ME
LIKE A DARK CANCER EATING AWAY AT ANYTHING THAT
REMAINS OF ARIEL SZILDE NO LEAVING IN ITS
PLACE ONLY THE MONSTER WHO'S FEEL MY VIO-
LENCE UNWANTED TO BE IRREVERSIBLE CON-
SUMED BY THE DRAGON

FROM EVERY CORNER OF MY MIND A DARK AND TERRIBLE
WAVE IS BLOWING IN, WASHING WHAT'S LEFT OF ME
AWAY, WASHING THE PAIN AWAY. I ALMOST WELCOME
THE WEAK BEING EATEN ALIVE BY THE POWERFUL.

FANG SAID THERE WOULD BE A PRIZE. MAYBE THIS IS WHAT HE MEANT. MAYBE THIS IS WHAT HE WANTED.

ARIEL
NO!

YOU MUST
RELINQUISH
THIS FORM
BE ONCE OR
IT WILL
DESTROY
YOU!

AND
WITHOUT YOUR
INFLUENCE IT
WILL DESTROY
US ALL!!

**LITTLE BIRD, ALWAYS APPEARING AND
DISAPPEARING AT YOUR LEISURE, JUST
LIKE THE FADED WIZARD "GANDALF"
WITH YOUR CRYPTIC WARNINGS AND
YOUR RIDDLES, THE BIRD OF LIGHT
WHO ALWAYS SEEMS TO KNOW RIGHT
WHEN I NEED HER, RIGHT WHEN I NEED**

M-MOM?
MOMMY?

HAVING FOUND THEIR TARGET THE FLAMES, MYSTICAL NATURE, SEEMINGLY DECIDE TO LET THEMSELVES DIE OUT, LEAVING BEHIND, BOTH FIGURATIVELY AND LITERALLY.

...SCARRED HUSKS OF WHAT WAS.

OFF IN THE DISTANCE I HEAR THE CATERHAUL OF APPROACHING SIRENS. THE CAVALRY IS COMING. BUT THEY'RE TOO LATE.

IS IT OVER? IS EVERYBODY DEAD?

ARE YOU DEAD?

WHERE'S PERRY AND HIS

..FATHER
OH, NO.

TOO LATE TO SAVE MY FATHER... TOO LATE TO SAVE...

CALEM FIE

ARE...
OH, GOD,
NOT YOU,
TOO...



I FIND HER JUST OVER THE
RIDGE AT THE HEART OF
A SHOULDERING CRATER..

...BLOODY AND BRUISED,
HALF-NAKED AND
SOBBING HYSTERICALLY.

AND WHEN I SEE HER LIKE
THAT, BROKEN AND DIS-
CARDED, HER INNOCENCE
DULY SHATTERED MY
HEART BREAKS FOR THE
SECOND TIME TONIGHT.

AS I HEAR THE
SIRENS DRAW
EVER CLOSER, I
KNOW WHAT HAS
TO BE DONE, BUT
HAVING THAT
KNOWLEDGE
DOESN'T MAKE
THINGS ANY
EASIER.

...SHE SAYS "PERRY" AND SHE
BUT TIES ITSELF INTO A
NICE LITTLE KNOT AS I
DESCEND TO HER SIDE.
SOMETIMES IT'S NICE TO
HAVE CHOICES. OTHER
TIMES DECISIONS ARE
TAKEN OUT OF YOUR
HANDS AND MADE FOR YOU.

ARIEL...?

OH,
PERRY.
PERRY WHAT
HAVE I
DONE?

THIS, I'M AFRAID...

.. IS ONE OF
THOSE
TIMES.



P-PLEASE...
PLEASE JUST
HOLD ME...

I'M SO...
SORRY FOR...
EVERYTHING...
I...

SHHH!
SHHH. IT'S
NOT YOUR
FAULT. NONE
OF THIS IS
YOUR FAULT...

...IT'S
OKAY...

LOOK UP INTO HIS EYES, DEEP,
SOULFUL BROWN EYES...
GLASSSED OVER AS THEY ARE
WITH PAIN, WITH LOSS.

I'VE NEVER EVEN KISSED
HIM. I WANT TO SO BAD,
BUT I DON'T. HE TENSES,
AND THAT LOOK IN HIS
EYES GETS VERY FAR AWAY.
THIS ISN'T GOING TO
HAVE A HAPPY ENDING...

HIS WORDS
CONFIRM
MY FEARS.

ARIEL...
LISTEN TO
ME, YOU
HAVE TO
LEAVE...

NO...

YOU
HAVE TO
LEAVE HERE,
ARIEL. DO YOU
HEAR THOSE
SIRENS?

IN LESS
THAN TEN MINUTES,
THIS PLACE IS
GOING TO BE
CRAWLING WITH
THE POLICE, SENTRY,
FIREMEN... THEY'RE
GOING TO **BLAME**
YOU, ARIEL.

THEY'RE
GOING TO
HOLD YOU
ACCOUNTABLE.
THEY'LL KILL
YOU, ARIEL.

DID...
ANY OF THEM
GET AWAY?

ARIEL,
YOU'RE NOT
LISTENING TO
ME. YOU'VE GOT
TO GET OUT OF
HERE. LEAVE
SALEM
FOREVER!
I'LL TELL
THEM...

PERRY,
PLEASE...

I'LL
TELL THEM
THAT YOU
DIED
HERE...

DON'T
SAY THAT...
DON'T MAKE ME
LEAVE YOU,
PERRY...
PLEASE...

...I'VE GOT
NOTHING
WITHOUT YOU!
I'VE GOT
NOWHERE
TO GO!

ARIEL...

...FIND
SOMEWHERE.

SO I GUESS THAT'S
IT. AT LEAST FOR
NOW. THAT'S HOW
IT ENDS.

I WANT TO RUN AFTER
HER, TAKE HER IN MY
ARMS AND TELL HER TO
STAY. TELL HER THAT
SOMEHOW, SOMEHOW
WE'D FIGURE THINGS
OUT... MAKE IT WORK
SEE THINGS THROUGH

I CAN'T.

...TELL HER I
LOVE HER.

BUT I DON'T.

THIS IS HOW IT
HAS TO BE.

I WATCH HER TURN TO LEAVE,
HER SOFT HEAVING CRIES
DRIFTING UPWARD INTO THE
CHILL NIGHT AIR...

I WATCH HER LEAVE
KNOWING DAMN WELL
I'LL CARRY HER
WITH ME ALWAYS...

LIFE IS CRUEL THAT
WAY SOMETIMES.
GOODBYE MY SWEET
ARIEL...



I'LL SEE YOU
IN MY DREAMS.

"I looked into my soul
What I found there brought tears,
the demons had grown in number
and gave life to all my fears..."

•A Treasury Of Sorrows

"Fear not this darkness that sur-
rounds us 'neath this devils' moon
Even as hope escapes us,
morning will be coming soon..."

•A Treasury Of Sorrows